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["SO OUR PRISONER IS FREE," CRIED JASPER, AS HE REACHED THE PORCH.]

## MILDRED'S INHERITANCE.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

#### A BROKEN DREAM.

WITH a fierce execration at the wretched being who scrambled out of his path, Gerald Fairfax started in pursuit of the flying mare.

It was a desperate race, for Warrior was no match for the fleet-footed creature that, goaded by terror, was speeding so madly over the hills, her rider clinging helplessly to the unheeded rein.

"The Ridge—oh, heavens, the Ridge!" burst from the lover's white lips as he saw in what direction the mare had turned. "If she reaches it all is lost."

He urged on his horse with the energy of despair. Warrior did his best, but his muscles were stiffened by age, he could never overtake the young, fiery creature whose wild spirit had been trained but never tamed.

On she sped like a winged thing, over hill and vale, that a moment ago lay such a fair and beautiful picture in the summer sunshine;

on, over bush, and thicket, and gully, toward the Ridge, a line of black, jagged rocks, that at some distant time had doubtless bounded the shore.

But the land had crept out beyond it now, and a long stretch of silvery sand lay between the rocks and the waves.

Still it was a perilous spot for a rider to pass, even when the horse was well under control, for the road across was broken and treacherous, and the crumbling rocks gave way at the slightest touch.

It was no wonder that Gerald's face was white and rigid as carved stone as he followed the black mare's flying footsteps there.

"Death!" he whispered to himself. "We invoked death and he has come."

Had he come, the grim enemy of life, and hope, and love? It seemed so, surely.

Gerald felt as if his icy grasp were upon his heart-strings when at last he reached the Ridge, for Black Eagle stood there panting, foaming, and riderless, quivering in every slender limb.

He flung himself from his own steed. It seemed to him for a moment that he could

neither think nor feel. The rude black causeway fell precipitately to the sands below, its sides broken by sharp, cruel, jagged rocks. If she were there, all, all was over.

"Milly!" he cried, hoarsely, "Milly! Oh, my love, my love!"

"Hush!" said a cold, stern voice beneath him—"hush! She is here."

The voice, the tone, the words, seemed the icy sentence of despair.

With the bound of a chamois, Gerald reached the foot of the rocks.

She was there, indeed, but not in the spot where he had dreaded to look.

On a second ledge, made by crumbling rocks and tide-washed sand, she lay, white and senseless, in Jasper Vernon's arms.

"Milly! Milly!" burst from her lover's quivering lips. "Oh, Heavens! my darling! She is dead!"

Jasper Vernon lifted his head. He had been bending down to wipe away the blood oozing slowly from a wound in her temple. There was a light, almost of triumph, in his eye, a strange ring in his cold voice.

"Dead!" he repeated, slowly. "No, I think not."

"You think not!" echoed his friend, fiercely. "You think not! Can you not tell? Milly, Milly, my love, my darling! Can you hear, can you look at me, Milly?"

"No, she can neither hear nor look at you," said the cold measured tone beside him. "Doctor Fairfax's medical education should teach him that."

But the taunt fell on an unconscious ear. With ashen face and features convulsed with agony, Gerald was kneeling beside his idol, his hand on her pulse, his head bent to catch her breath.

"Great Heaven!" he whispered; "it is all over. Her pulse is gone!"

"No," said the voice, whose cold deliberation contrasted so strongly with the anguished quiver in his tone, "not yet."

"We should have brandy, ice, something to restore—to save her! Her face is the hue of death. Go, for Heaven's sake, Vernon! Get help! We must move her somehow. Oh, my love—my love, to think our brief day-dream should end thus—thus!"

Jasper Vernon arose, his own face changeless as marble. There was not a quiver of sympathy in unrigid lines; and yet the scene was one to stir the emotions of the coldest heart. The beautiful girl lying there, white and senseless, in the summer sunshine, her rich hair and dress stained with blood, her dark eyes seemingly closed for ever on a world that a moment ago had stretched before a very Eden of hope and love; the proud man bending over her, his face convulsed with anguish, his brow beaded with drops of agony that told of a breaking heart:

"Milly, Milly!" he murmured, little dreaming how his tender whispers reached the one listener whose ear they reached; "my love, my darling, my wife! Can I do nothing for you, my own—my own!"

"The boat-house is near," said Jasper Vernon, quietly. "I think it would be best to move her there for the present. There are cushions in the boat, and I keep a small medicine-chest there. I am sometimes called to the men along the banks. It would be dangerous to move her far just yet, until we know the extent of her injuries. The fall was broken, as you can see. If the mare had thrown her a few yards further on there would have been no hope."

"And now you think there is?" asked Gerald, eagerly.

"I think there is," was the answer, in the dispassionate tones of an anatomist bending over a corpse. "The sudden shock to the brain is about all we have to fear. How that may result we cannot tell. If we lift her into the boat-house I think we may possibly restore her to consciousness at once. At least, we can try."

"Aye, try!" said Gerald Fairfax, huskily—"try, for Heaven's sake, Vernon! You have the skill to do it, if any living man has, and your head and heart are cool. Mine are throbbing and burning so that I cannot act—I cannot think! Save her if you can, old friend—save her! She is to be my wife, you know—my wife! Vernon," and the husky voice broke completely, "don't scorn me, old fellow. Perhaps some day you will know what this—this love is, that can make a strong, proud man weak as a child. It was only a moment ago that she was at my side in all the beauty of her perfect womanhood; only a moment ago that her voice was whispering to me the innocent love of her heart; only a moment ago that life seemed to dream of hope and happiness, and now—now—oh Heavens! it seems more than man appear—"

"Will you help me to lift her into the boat-house?" said Jasper's quiet, passionless tones. "It will be easier for her, if we move her together; though, if you are unable, I can carry her alone."

"I—I will help you," said the unhappy lover, starting up from his reverie of despair. "Lift her gently, Vernon. My poor, poor

darling! She may be suffering more than we dream."

"She is suffering nothing." For the first time there was impatient bitterness in Jasper Vernon's voice. "Don't be such a weak fool, Fairfax! Do you think I would harm a hair of her head?"

"Harm a hair of her head!"

It was no wonder that his words rang out at last in sharp scorn of the anguish that he at once shared like a man and triumphed like a demon to see.

Gently and tenderly they lifted her into the boat-house. Old Phil stood at the door, bare-headed and sympathetic, as they bore in the helpless burden, and laid her upon an improvised couch of sails and cushions.

"Lord, Lord, but it were an awful sight!" he declared afterwards to his cronies. "The poor young lady looked dead as gone in earnest, and the gentlemen themselves were both white as spectrums out of the grave. But, as I said then, and I say now, if there is one man on earth that can bring dead folk to life that man, sir, is Doctor Jasper Vernon!"

And though it was not by any such miraculous skill as old Phil supposed, Milly was brought back to life again. But it was no gentle, gradual guidance from an unknown shore now. A fiery current seemed burning in her veins when consciousness returned, for Jasper had used powerful stimulants, and the brandy he had poured through her white lips quickened every nerve and pulse into sudden action.

She looked around. The wide doors of the boat-house had been thrown open to fresh air, and the sea stretched before her, vast, lonely, illimitable, a world of white, on whose shores she seemed cast by some new storm of fate.

Anxious faces bent around her; the cold face of her cousin Jasper; the rugged features of her uncle Sir Charles; Barbara, hushed and awe-struck; Gerald, pale and stern, with anguish and suspense.

But none of these, not even her lover's countenance, seemed to stir her morbid gaze.

A gaunt, hideous face rose before her, bloated and distorted; a harsh, cruel voice was in her ear; a rough grasp was on her arm.

That last terrible sight that had met her eyes ere she fell started up before her mind in fearful distinctness—started up and was recognized; the veil had been swept from the mental vision; the past stood clearly revealed to her shrinking gaze; she remembered all!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE AWAKENING.

SHE remembered all. It was as if the darkness that had troubled and bewildered her so long had been suddenly illumined by the lurid glow of a world in flames—the world in which she, poor Milly Ford, had known love and peace and happiness.

It was as if the shadows that she had so vainly striven to shape and name had turned upon her, a band of mighty and pitiless enemies; it was as if the sounds that had reached her ear in faint broken echoes had risen into a clamorous chorus of discord and despair.

She remembered all. The wretched home, the long years of toil and poverty, and grinding care; the rough words, the curses, the blows.

She remembered the huge factory, with its whirling wheels and humming voices, and ceaseless din; of wearying days.

She remembered the dark, dark nights of labour and bitterness and unrest; she remembered the tall gloomy house, with its broken windows and dark narrow stairways and crowding inmates; the old Irishman crouching over his last, and Mrs. Sullivan's shrill voice echoing in the yard, and little Miss Wilkins's cracked treble answering mildly from the window.

And she remembered—ah! with what a

strange anguish of despair!—that little low attic under the roof, the frail form resting on the narrow bed, and the sweet face smiling up from the pillows, the low voice speaking with its last failing, breath words of love and comfort and hope.

"If I had gold or gems to leave behind me, Milly, dear, they should all be yours—all be yours! If I could see them before I die, and tell them all you have done for me, they would be kind and loving to you I think, dear, for my sake!"

For her sake—oh, what bitter mockery it seemed—for her sake! And she was here with her name, in her place—in Milly's place!

"My darling, my darling!"—it was the low, trembling voice of her lover that spoke—"look up at me. Do you know me, Milly, my sweet love?"

Did she know him? The dark eyes turned towards him in dumb anguish. She dared not speak to him—she the living lie whom he had taken to his heart! She could not speak to him yet.

"She does know me," was the rapturous whisper. Sir Charles, looking there is consciousness in her eye. Vernon, I believe—I hope the worst is past!"

"Yes, the worst is past," answered Jasper, quietly. "She has escaped wonderfully, almost miraculously. That ledge of sand saved her. It broke the fall that would have been otherwise surely fatal."

"She shall never mount that infernal mare again while I have the strength to prevent it," broke in the baronet, always crude under any painful excitement. "There was a devil in the creature's eye from the first, sir, and I always told you so. Where is she? Her neck is broken, I hope and trust."

"No, sir! She is, unfortunately for your wishes, quite safe," was the dry response. "She was trained so perfectly that I thought there was no danger, or I would never have permitted a lady to mount her."

"Trained and educated!" growled the baronet. "I shall endeavour to train the devil himself. These new man things you can't trust, sir, if you train them for ever, and a white-eyed mare is one of them!"

"And a black-eyed woman is the other," muttered old Phil from the background.

Every word of the conversation reached Milly, as she lay there among them, white and still. There was such clear relief in every face, in every tone. Gerald was laying his pale brow with perfumed water, and holding crushed ice to her wounded temple, and all the while whispering tender words of love and cheer.

"You are growing better, my darling—so much better! Nay, do not try to talk; it may harm you. It is nothing very serious. You were thrown from your horse and stunned. You will soon be quite well again—quite well. I think we can move her to the house now, Vernon. She feels strange and bewildered here. A few hours' quiet sleep would do more for her than all our medicine. Bring the litter here, Phil. Don't shrink so, darling. No one is going to hurt you. We will lift you as gently as loving arms can. We are going to take you home."

They were going to take her home—home! Ah, what bitterness there was in the word now—the word that had been so strangely sweet!

They lifted her on a couch soft as down. Gently and tenderly they bore her to the carriage that was waiting on the road above the beach.

A low moan burst from her lips as she was placed on the silken cushions.

"Be careful! be careful! Good heaven, sir, don't you see she is suffering?" said the baronet, fiercely.

"Aye, suffering indeed; but not as they dreamed. All bodily pain seemed deadened by the agony that convulsed her heart and soul—the agony that every word of tenderness, every whisper of love, every gentle courtesy seemed to deepen. For neither to love, nor tenderness, nor courtesy had she a right; they belonged to the dead girl sleeping far away in



her unknown grave—the girl whose place she held, whose name she bore, into whose lost life-path her wandering feet had strayed.

Slowly and carefully the carriage was driven home—so slowly and carefully that the dark eyes, gazing despairingly over the sunlit hills, had time to note each dear, familiar scene—grove and garden, vale and fountain, woodland path and mossy glade.

She had lived in the fields and the forests since her coming to Vernon Hall. It seemed as if she had turned to Nature for strength and healing, as a child turns to its mother's breast. But even Nature seemed to wear a smile of mocking brightness to-day.

What was she, the daughter of poverty and toil, doing here?

With a shuddering sigh she closed her eyes, while they bore her up the broad steps and over the threshold of the stately house, where she had no right, no claim.

The servants were waiting in the hall, tearful and sympathizing. Miss Milly, with her low, calm voice and gentle ways, was a favourite with all.

"The poor, poor darling!" sobbed Mrs. Truscott. "To think of her being brought home like this—she that went from us gay as a bird a few hours ago! Her room is all ready, sir, and everything that mortal can do to serve her—and nurse her I will do, for her mother was a friend to me and mine when we needed friends sore."

And in her own room they left her—the beautiful room that had been decked and brightened for her coming home.

Such a face of white despair looked up at him from the snowy pillows, that Gerald Fairfax felt his heart chill with an icy fear.

Was she in such pain? Then, perhaps, the hurt was greater than they had dreamed—perhaps they had been deceived.

"My darling!" he said, bending over her anxiously. "Milly, are you suffering still, love—suffering much?"

"Yes, suffering much," she repeated, slowly, lifting her eyes to his with a glance that touched him almost to tears. "But I can bear it if—"

"If what, dear?"

"If—" she repeated, hesitatingly, that piteous gaze still fixed on his face, "if you love me."

"If I love you!" he echoed. "My darling, can you doubt it? Love you, my own beautiful one! Why do you ask so strange a question? Is not my heart aching with its love and sorrow for you now?"

"But—but—" her whisper was so low he scarcely could catch it—"if I were not all that you dreamed—if you should find me a different being from her to whom you gave your heart?"

He thought he understood her. She feared she would be crippled, disfigured—that perhaps the grace and beauty he had loved were lessened, if not lost.

"Foolish girl!" he said, with a low, happy laugh. "You could never change to me. Even if this fall had crippled you for ever you would be as precious to me in your helplessness as in your strength and beauty. Did I not tell you that I had given you my heart?—and a heart like mine once given, dear, is given for aye. Remember the vow beneath the old oak-tree—in joy and sorrow, storm and sunshine, life and death, you are mine—mine alone. "But"—his tone grew lighter—"you can trust to your doctor's words. You have nothing to fear. It is but the shock and bruise of the fall you feel now. Heaven was very merciful to us, dear, in saving you from greater harm. In a very few days you will be about, as well and strong, as happy and beautiful, as ever. Don't let a thought of change trouble you. There can be no change for us, dear. Our blessed future is secure. Close those sweet, troubled eyes, and go to sleep."

And, sealing the white, drooping lids with a kiss, he was gone.

Ah, if he could have seen the bitter drops of anguish stealing slowly through the silken

ashes, he would have pitied her more, even though he had understood her sorrow less.

All through that summer day she lay thus white and silent. The anxious watchers moved about her room with hushed voices and noiseless footsteps.

Mrs. Truscott, armed with a huge feather fan, established herself as head nurse by the bedside. Miss Vernon came and went, noiselessly, with cooling drinks and soothing lotions.

Every sound of life was stilled in halls and corridors below; nothing must disturb the patient's needful repose.

Now and then the dark eyes opened for a moment, and the sick girl looked around her with a dull, weary gaze; but the waxen lips soon drooped again, and the whisper went down to the doctors:

"All is well; she still sleeps."

Still asleep! Aye, for the volcano sleeps, with the fires of death and destruction raging in its bosom—as the ocean sleeps, when the brassy light in the horizon tells the skilled navigator to prepare for the gathering storm!

Loud and fierce through her rebellious soul rang the despairing cry,—

"He is mine—mine for ever! I will peril all things, I will dare all things, I will suffer all things, but I will not, I cannot, give him up!"

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### A CROWN OF THORNS.

Two weeks had passed. Doctor Fairfax's prophesy had proved a cheerfully correct one. Milly had taken her old place in the family group, as strong, as well, and as beautiful as ever—nay, even more beautiful, though much of her freshness and youth seemed to have been left in that darkened chamber up-stairs, whence she had just emerged, this morning, looking older by five years than the happy girl who had entered off so gladly through the summer sunshine at her lover's side, only two weeks ago.

But this sudden maturity only gave an added charm to the countenance that had rather lacked depth and expression before.

Good Mrs. Truscott, who had been the most faithful of nurses, had just ensconced her charge comfortably in a great arm-chair, on the breezy corner of the porch; and as she sat there in her dainty negligee of snowy muslin and laces, her lap full of the roses that Gerald had just plucked for her, she looked like the fitting queen of such a home and such a heart.

The lovers were alone. Doctor Fairfax had postponed his departure with a reckless disregard of consequences. He could think of nothing while Milly lay helpless in that darkened chamber, save her suffering, her danger. It seemed as if his love were a plant to be nourished by the dew of tenderness and sympathy—as if Milly were destined always to need his protecting care.

"There, I believe, you have all the sweetest roses in the garden," he said, as he dropped a half-blown *Cloth of Gold* on the fragrant heap in her lap. "They are growing rarer and more beautiful, now that June has gone."

"June has gone!" she repeated, dreamily.

"I had forgotten it."

"It is the fifteenth day of July," he continued, beginning to smooth away the thorns from some of the pretty clusters with his knife. "I should have been back in my office two weeks ago."

A sudden shadow darkened her face.

"That means that you must leave me soon—that you cannot remain any longer."

"What a quick little logician!" he said, smiling. "Do you know you seem to me to have grown wonderfully wise of late—wonderfully wise and womanly? Even those beautiful eyes seem changed."

"Changed!" she echoed, in a tone of pain.

"Have I changed, Gerald?"

"Only for the better, dear," he answered, quickly—"much for the better. You seem to me wiser, tenderer, older than—than before

you promised to be my own. It is as if the girl had ripened into the woman, the maiden were rising into the dignity of the wife."

"The wife!" she whispered, with almost a sob. "Gerald, something tells me that will never be. I—I am not worthy of a heart like yours; and yet—and yet if I lost your love there would be nothing—nothing left!"

"My dearest child, what is the matter with you?" He prisoned both the trembling hands in his own and looked down on her with smiling eyes. "Why will you harp on that discordant string? Have I not told you that change was impossible to me? Do you doubt me, Milly?"

"No, no!" she answered. "I do not doubt you. But—but I have known so much sorrow, and there might be change which we could not control. If—if such should come, Gerald, if we should be separated for ever by some storm of fate we could not resist, would you think of me, pitifully, tenderly, still?"

"Pitifully, tenderly! My darling, my darling! why will you conjure up such melancholy phantoms? You are nervous and depressed from your two weeks' imprisonment. You had time to imagine all sorts of horrors while you were shut up in that darkened room up-stairs."

"Aye, all sorts of horrors!" she echoed with a shudder. "All sorts of horrors—horrors that you cannot guess. Gerald, Gerald! do not leave me along with them! Do not go just—just yet!"

He was looking at her with grave anxiety now.

She was indeed nervous, despondent, unlike herself.

He seemed to notice for the first time that the new light in her eye was a strange, restless fire, and the new beauty in her face was the pencilling touch of pain.

"My darling," he said, gently, "I must go. Imperative business calls me, Milly, but we need not be separated. You can come with me, dear, if you will. What need is there of waiting so long? Let us be married at once."

"At once?" she whispered; and he saw the glad light flash into her eyes, though her tone was low and trembling. "Oh, no—that cannot be! It is too soon—too soon!"

"Too soon? By no means," he answered, eagerly. "It is the best thing for you, under the circumstances—the best and wisest. I will take you with me abroad next month, and bring you back before winter, your own bright, sweet, happy self again. Only say that you are willing, and I will see Sir Charles this morning and arrange everything. He will consent, I know, when I explain the matter to him—consent freely. Say the word, my sweet! Will you go with me? I sail in two weeks."

"Two weeks?" she repeated, despairingly—"only two weeks, and you will be gone so long—oh, so long!"

"Until November," he answered. "Perhaps longer; I cannot tell. I go abroad on business connected with the estate. I have in trust—to discover, if possible, some trace of the rightful heir. It will be a weary exile without you, love; but with you—oh, darling, think what a holiday of happiness and love! And it will only be anticipating matters a little. We were to have been married in December. Milly, will you go with me now?"

She had buried her face in her hands; now she lifted it, white and rigid, to his own.

"No, no—do not ask me, do not tempt me, Gerald! Not—not yet!"

"Not yet? My darling, how strangely you speak this morning!" There was a faint tone of reproach in his voice. "You do not fear to trust yourself to me, Milly? It is for your own good I plead even more than my happiness."

"Give me time," she whispered humbly—"time to think—time to—"

She stopped suddenly. Over her—over the troubled beauty of her face—there seemed to fall a lifeless mask. It was as if every mobile

feature had been instantaneously turned into stone.

A tall, slender figure was walking slowly along the gravelled pathway that led from the west tower. It was Jasper Vernon.

"So our prisoner is free," he said, as he reached the porch; and he held out his hand to the pale girl seated amid her roses. "Are you almost ready for another ride on Black Eagle, cousin Milly?"

"No," she answered, with a visible shudder. "I will never mount her again—never."

"Never is a long day," he said, his cold eyes resting on her face—"a long, long day. It is a word that I have learned to erase from my vocabulary."

"Why," asked Gerald Fairfax, "don't you find any use for it professionally, Vernon?"

"Neither professionally nor practically," was the quiet reply. "It conveys a defiance of fate and change that experience has taught me to be folly. Never! What is it that we can truly say can never be?"

"Plenty of things," answered Gerald. "Are there no unchanging laws, my Solon?—no natural and practical impossibilities?"

"I speak only of that realm which man controls," said the other, gravely. "There is no never there. Our thoughts, our hopes, our fears, our *wills* themselves, may change—do change—nay, often must change, despite ourselves. We can count on no future, we can defy no past. There are powers in both often beyond our control. But we won't wander into a philosophical discussion, Gerald. Miss Milly looks alarmed already. Will you step over into my growlery after awhile? I have just received some prints I would like to show you. I promised old Phil to come down to the boat-house this morning, to see about some repairs. I will be back in about an hour, at which time, according to my prescription, cousin Milly should banish all cavaliers, and take a siesta. She looks far from strong yet."

Far from strong, indeed. As he turned away, she rose, white, weak, trembling in every limb, her flowers falling around her in unheeded profusion.

"Go," she said to her lover—"go! If he wants you, go now."

"Why? There is no hurry, dear, unless you are tired. Do you want to go to your room and rest?"

"Yes," she answered, "I am tired; I—I want rest. And—and, Gerald—"

She paused, and lifted her eyes to his face. Ah, the old, childish trust was gone. They had the bright, restless look of a hunted thing now.

"Well, my darling?"

"I have thought it over, and you—you can ask Sir Charles. I will go away with you, Gerald, when you wish."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### "FOR MISS MILLY."

"It may be for the best, as you say, lad," said the baronet, rubbing his nose; "it may be for the best; but I don't like giving up my girl so soon to you or anybody else. Why can't she grow well and strong here? She did it before. There wasn't a brighter, healthier, happier creature trod the earth than my Milly was before that cursed fall! I'd like to break that black brute's neck that gave it to her! And now you tell me she is nervous and low-spirited, and needs a change. Well, you may be right, sir. You've done more for her than any one else, and have the claim to her heart. Though I'd like to keep her a bit longer, I'll not be selfish to say ye nay. So have it as ye will, lad—have it as ye will."

"A wedding in a fortnight!" exclaimed Mrs. Truscott, in mingled delight and dismay—"a wedding in a fortnight, and the bride herself jilted out of the grip of Death; and all the cakes, and jellies, and pastries to be made, and the guests' rooms aired, and the best silver polished! And, Heaven bless us! there never were such sudden goings-on in Vernon

Hall before! In my time there was always six months' notice of a marriage at least."

"But our times was slow times, Mrs. Truscott," said old Edward, the butler, gravely—"our times were slow times, and it's better a wedding than a funeral, any day."

"You're right there, Mr. Edwards," said Emma, the pretty housemaid; "and I'm glad enough for one that the young mistress is going to make things a bit brighter for us. It's been dull enough, Heaven knows, this many a year at Vernon Hall. 'Lucky the wooing that's not long a-doing' is an old saying, and,—Emma sank her voice to a significance whisper—"there's one in the house this day knows it to her cost."

"And if you mean Miss Vernon, you'd better keep your tongue in your head and your saying to yourself, Emma Morris," said Mrs. Truscott.

"I haven't said who I meant," answered Emma, pertly. "I don't name no name; but, for all that, I do say there are some people who would give their eyes to be bride instead of bridesmaid a fortnight from to-day."

"Hold your tongue, girl, and go on with your work!" said Mrs. Truscott, roused at last into severity. "There's that boy again!" and she turned towards the kitchen door, where a ragged, unkempt urchin stood peering in at the tempting array of pies just removed from the oven. "Didn't I tell you yesterday I wouldn't have you hanging about the doors, a-trying what you could pick up?"

"He's be'n here every day fur more'n a week," said Emma, willing to turn the tide of the good dame's wrath in another direction. "As wildish, gipsyiah-looking a young villyon as I ever laid eyes on. And he don't come to beg nuther; so I reckon it must be to steal."

"I didn't come fur to beg or steal," answered the boy, sullenly. "I come fur to ask how was the young lady—she that got hurt."

"Oh, he came to ask how Miss Milly was," said Emma, mockingly. "Very perlitte of you, sir, to be sure! Many thanks for your kindness! And Miss Milly is well and happy, and going to be married this day two weeks."

The boy had slunk away from the door while the woman spoke; he turned the corner of the house, and looked up wistfully at the broad porches and open windows.

"If I could only find her!" he whispered to himself. "Now that she is well again," he said, "if she knew how bad he was, she'd help him. Or, if she didn't, he could make her. Jiminy! I s'pect that's her now."

A lady had stepped out on one of the lower porches as he spoke—a lady that, to the boy's delighted eyes, seemed beautiful as an angel, or a fairy queen.

She was dressed in soft, floating robes of white, and her cheek and brow were like the lily leaf in their dazzling fairness; while the pale, golden hair that aureoled her head seemed like a crown of light.

She walked to the railings of the verandah and stood there, looking far off, but seeming to see nothing.

Even the boy's dulled eyes could discern the traces of some pain or passion in the pale face.

"That's her," he said, conclusively. "She looks sick, and she looks skeered and worried, and she as purty as a pictur'. That must be her."

He drew closer to the porch. The rustling in the vines attracted the lady's attention.

"Who is it?" she asked sharply. "Boy, what are you doing there?"

"I came to speak to you, ma'am," he said, in a cautious whisper, "and I was told there wasn't nobody must hear me. I wasn't to say nothing to no one but the young lady that got hurt the other day—her they call Miss Milly."

There was a moment's pause, then the lady drew a long breath.

"Wait one moment," she said. "Step back there in the thicket near the fountain. I will come to you. Someone may hear us talking here."

"It's her," said the boy, chuckling, as he shambled off into the place she designated. "I knowed it. She's up to snuff, too, fangel as she looks."

In a few moments she joined him in the dark shadows of the copse that surrounded the Pirate's Well.

The boy, a bronzed little vagabond, who had grown up wild, looked at her half in awe, half in admiration. He had never seen anything so delicate and fair.

"You be Miss Milly?" he said, confidently.

Again she paused for a moment, and then the answer came slowly and deliberately.—

"Yes, I am Miss Milly. What is it you want with her?"

"It ain't me, ma'am—I don't want nothink, but him that you knows on sent me to ax you for help."

"Him that I know of?" repeated the lady with eager inquiry.

"That was the words I was to say to you, ma'am," continued the boy. "He said you'd understand well enough, for he has a right to your help if there was any one in the world had. And he's a-lying down in an old hut in the Swamp Hollow, bad as bad can be. I found him ther one day when I was digging for bait, and he guv me money to bring him suthing to eat and drink, and I've be'n bringing it to him ever since. But the money's all gone now, and the fever's getting wusser, and he don't dare to call in the doctor for fear they'd blow on him to the officers, and he'd get taken back to jail."

"To—to jail, you say to jail?"

Such a strange light flashed into the lady's eyes, it seemed almost for the moment as if they flamed.

"He got into some sort of trouble, ma'am—I don't know what," continued the small narrator, "and he was sent up for five years, and he broke off in the cars, and hez been a-hiding ever since. He knowed you that day he seed you in Reyston Chase, he said, and he was pretty sure you knowed him. And I've been a-coming here every day fur a week or more, trying to get a word with you, for he told me you'd help him, sure, since you'd got in with such high 'spectable people now. You wouldn't like him to bring you to disgrace."

"To disgrace?" Again that strange, lambent gleam flashed in the lady's eyes. "You are right," she said; and the words seemed to come through her set teeth. "I will help you and him. Take him this." She took a note from the ivory portmanteau in her pocket, and placed it in the boy's hand. "Tell him it is impossible for me to come to him just yet, but I will send a doctor to him to-night whom he can trust! Can you come back here to-night at ten?"

"Yes, ma'am!" said the boy, quite subdued by the munificence of his patroness—for the note was for five pounds—"I kin come back."

"You will find me waiting for you here," she said, hurriedly. "Say nothing to any one else; do not even mention my name. If you are faithful I will reward you beyond your hopes. To-night at ten, remember. There is something to remind you of your trust," and she slipped a silver piece in the boy's hand. "That is for yourself; the other for him!"

"Thank you, ma'am! I'll remember, you needn't fear. I'll be here ag'in at ten, ma'am, and I'll tell him all you've said—that you will send him a doctor he can trust!"

(To be continued.)

It is far better to give a child a good constitution, strong arms, a deep chest, a clear eye, perfect teeth, a pure skin, dexterity with the hand, a love for truth, a desire for purity, courage, hope, trust, love, and the ability to take care of himself than, without these things, to leave him all the wealth of a Croesus.



## STRAYED AWAY.

## CHAPTER L.

## IN PERIL.

ON the day before that wretched evening when poor Fanny went out to make the fatal sacrifice to her lost love, Arthur Wilson and his mother travelled down to Penge. The doctor's widow had accepted the invitation with a degree of pleasure, for she wanted to see the lady of whom her son had said so much.

"It may be the turning point of his life," she thought. "It may cure him entirely of the infatuation that has held him so long. It was good that he met Miss Millard under these circumstances. They have given him a special interest in her, when but for them she would have been but an ordinary woman, and an ordinary woman could never reach his heart."

The doctor's widow fixed her son at a high standard. She whose life had been happy with her husband—she who had been a help and not a fetter to him, knew how difficult it was to find a woman true to her instincts and her duty. Experience had taught her what a wife should be, and she wanted the girl whom Arthur chose to be such a wife as she had been.

Arthur, little as he thought of dress in general, felt proud of his mother as he put her shawl on. Mrs. Wilson's noble beauty had not faded. She wore a dress of plain black velvet, and it suited her stately style.

"I think you will say with me that Adelaide Millard is like our Frances," he said. "I hope you will."

"Our Frances, Arthur?"

"I think of her in that way, and I always shall."

"If you were married?"

"My wife would not be jealous. She would know me too well."

Mrs. Wilson did not argue with him. Her hope was that the dream would fade by degrees—give place to a reality in the shape of the lady he liked for her resemblance to the one he could not forget.

That Fanny was ever in his thoughts was evident even now, for he said,—

"I wish you would go and see her, mother. We do not know what may have happened since you were there. Frances is very fond of you, and if we cannot help her to happiness, your sympathy will give her strength to bear her trouble."

"I will see her," said Mrs. Wilson, thinking it best to assent so far.

"When?"

"Within the next few days."

"Why not to-morrow? You may hear whether anything has taken place."

"I will write to her to-morrow, and promise her a visit for the next day. Will that content you?"

"Yes," he said, gratefully, "that will do. You see, I feel myself the cause of her estrangement. I would go to Mr. Falkland if I knew where to find him."

"Not yet," said Mrs. Wilson.

And thus it ended for the time.

Arthur went down to Penge with a pleasant feeling at his heart, for he felt that he would be welcome to Adelaide. He had saved her from Percy, he was sure of that, and Arthur looked upon it as his especial mission to be a woman's true and faithful guardian.

He was disappointed, however, in Miss Millard's treatment of him. There was a restraint that he mistook for coldness in her manner. There was something on her mind, and it made her seem wanting in cordiality. Arthur was pained more for her sake than his own. He took her pensive quiet as a sign that she still clung to the man, who, but for him, might have wrecked her happiness.

"Adelaide has not got over it yet," said Mr. Millard to his guest, when they strolled in the long garden with a cigar after dinner. "I am half afraid that the fellow still keeps up a cor-

respondence with her; but I think it best to watch her closely, and say nothing."

"Yes, it is best. Every word upon the subject only brings a remembrance that, had better be left to die out of itself."

When the two gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, much of Adelaide's restraint had worn away, and she was talking freely with Mrs. Wilson. The doctor's widow had an irresistible way of winning confidence.

The junior Millards were there, slightly in awe of Arthur's stately mother. They were sadly out of their atmosphere in the society of ladies, and they were uncomfortable between a secret longing for the billiard-room and a conviction that for once their father intended them to remain in the room like gentlemen. Mrs. Wilson kindly tried to put them at ease. She pitied them; she saw that their hearts were sound enough, only the heads were affected.

They made an attempt to be congenial, and, having no better taste, let off small satires at ladies' dress, referring to Arthur whether he did not think it absurd. But Mr. Wilson had the happy faculty of giving consideration to trifles, and he took the matter in a different light.

"Fancy, if a fellow marries," said Sydney Millard, "he would want the income of a juvenile Rothschild to pay his wife's milliners' bills. Girls only live to dress."

"You take an exaggerated view," said Arthur. "Dress does occupy much, perhaps too much of a girl's attention; but it is while their time is idle—occupied only by themselves. It is different when they marry; life has a purpose for them then. They live for home, not for the world. The little extravagances are modified; they change with the change."

Sydney not being prepared with a reply shook his head, then presently burst out with,—

"It's their vanity, and they can't help it."

"There you mistake," said Arthur, coming to the charge with a smiling gravity that made young Millard wish he had not began the discussion. "A woman's instincts are artistic, her love for the beautiful innate; and this artistic instinct is most easily gratified in the shape of dress, the blending of colour, the arrangement of drapery. A well-dressed woman is a picture for an artist to dwell upon with delight. She never does herself so much injustice as when she over-dresses. The picture is spoiled."

Sydney saw his chance then.

"Then there's a great many pictures spoiled."

"We must not condemn the many for the fault of the few. There are, I grant you, cases where women give way to the extravagance of fashion—leave themselves in the hands of a milliner, who is only a milliner, and not an artist. Then we have colour out of harmony—grace out of shape."

"Who is the best judge of a lady's dress?" asked Adelaide, glad to see her brother driven into a state of mystification by hearing a man defending what Sydney termed a woman's fondness for display.

"The lady herself, when she is wise enough to be guided by herself. Her instinct tells her that she looks prettier sometimes than others, and the cause is the difference of colour and shape of dress. Fashion is simply fashion, and it should be art."

"That does not answer the charge of extravagance," said Sydney.

"Extravagance is not so general as you imagine. The true lady is an economist in dress—the true lady is never too poor to dress well. Her taste is correct, and she is elegant at half the expense incurred by those who, wanting that taste, and putting themselves at the mercy of the milliner, spend endless money in vain attempts to outshine. They begin by trying to be beautiful, and end by being absurdly gorgeous."

"If you were married, would you let your wife spend as much money as she liked?"

"Most certainly. I should never attempt to

control her inclination. She would know my income and what dress it would afford. I should leave it then to her good taste and common sense."

"But if it had been her habit to be extravagant she could not give it up."

"She would. The woman you marry is not the woman you have married."

"I do not take your meaning."

"You marry a girl set off at her best—dressed, perhaps, beyond her father's resources or position. No girl ever yet married well who did not expect to marry better, and when her fate comes—when love, giving her strength to look the truth in the face, gives her to a poorer man than she expected, out come the noble instincts of the woman, and she is content. Her longing for extravagance dies as the rich raiment—the relics of her girlhood—wears away. A woman need not always be in silk or velvet to be lovely. A true woman is always beautiful in her husband's sight, and that is enough for her."

"Well, Mr. Wilson," said Sydney, unconvinced, though with a coming sense that he was in the wrong, "when you marry I hope you will find it so."

"I shall. Men who do not find it so have themselves to blame."

"Queer fellow, that," said Sydney to his brother a little later. "Wants to make out that a girl's love of finery is artistic instinct. Bosh, ain't it?"

"I don't know. I think he thinks more about things in general than we do, and perhaps he was right. We spend an awful lot in dress, and spend a lot more one way and the other; and it strikes me somehow that our tailors are as bad as the girls' milliners, and we as stupid as the girls. We wear just what a tailor likes to give us."

"So we do."

"If we were to look through a seven years' collection of our own old clothes I don't think we should have much to say about the girls, Syd."

"Not with Mr. Wilson present, anyhow," said Sydney. "Let's have some billiards."

Though the subject was not on the surface one of deep interest, the part Arthur had taken in it advanced him far in Adelaide's favour; it showed that he could be just to a woman, and merciful to her faults.

They stayed so late in conversation that the last train was gone before they rose to depart, and Millard pressed them to stay. Mrs. Wilson had taken a great liking to Adelaide, and she stayed; judging wisely that in a day spent with her from morning till night in the midst of her own home she would see more of her true character than would be revealed in the course of fifty visits of ceremony.

The doctor's widow did see the same points of resemblance that had impressed Arthur; but they were points of disposition rather than of face or figure. An expression now and then—a tone of voice that spoke the same depth of soul, a lifting or a drooping of the eye; a remark called up a smile that would have made Fanny smile; a thoughtful look when Fanny would have looked thoughtful—these made the resemblance.

Arthur looked at his mother as if to ask her opinion, and she smiled approval. Mr. Millard and Mrs. Wilson grew confidential while Arthur and Adelaide sat out of hearing in a far distant corner of the large drawing-room.

"Yes," said Millard, speaking of Arthur and the part he had taken in proving Fanny's marriage to Percy Falkland, "he is the noblest fellow I ever met. A man of perfect honour and good sentiment, my dear madam. There is no cant in him. He is what a young man should be. I would trust him with anything in my house."

Mrs. Wilson smiled.

"Even with your daughter?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," he said, sincerely. "I would give a thousand pounds to see things going that way."

They exchanged a quiet shake of the hand

as if a silent compact were made that instant.

"And it would be a sort of 'poetical justice,' smiled the stockbroker; "for your son was disappointed in the lady you have mentioned, and Adelaide with Falkland—I should like to see it."

Arthur and Miss Millard, enjoying the beauty of the starlight, and a well chosen conversation, were entirely unconscious of the arrangement made for their benefit, and whatever advantage Arthur might have gained was lost to him as yet, for Percy was in her mind. As Millard feared, they still corresponded—or rather Percy wrote to her, and she received his letters.

His last one was in her bosom now, and that last one had filled her with pain. It had re-awakened, too, the desire to see him once more. Percy had ceased to write his long, despairing letters; he tried the effect of the brief and pathetic.

"And even you have turned against me, with the rest of the world," he wrote in his last: "I leave England to-morrow, with no hope, no word of farewell!"

That night when Adelaide read the lines in her bedroom her rash resolve strengthened, and she determined to go to him.

"I cannot let him go without a word—with out a kiss!" she said. "He shall know that though we part for ever I still love him!"

## CHAPTER LI.

### NEARLY LOST.

It was Adelaide's custom to go for an early morning walk, and it was a custom to which she owed much of her freshness and beauty. Fenge is not a great way from London, yet the air is as pure there and the scenery as picturesque as if it were a hundred miles away from the great metropolis, instead of being so near that the distance between its rural prettiness and the City is only divided by about twenty minutes of railroad.

There were other young ladies in the district who, like herself, made early visits and received early visitors, so it was no matter of surprise when Miss Millard appeared at the breakfast-table in walking costume, and announced her intention of calling on a few of her friends.

"I may be more than an hour," she said, in a tone that implied she might not be gone much longer. The girl could not utter a deliberate falsehood, and did not like to practice an equivocation; but her regard for Percy made her do the latter on this occasion. "You will pardon me, my dear Mrs. Wilson—I have a call to make."

Under the glance of the doctor's widow's grave grey eyes Adelaide coloured involuntarily, and went out to avoid a second look. Something in the girl's manner made Mrs. Wilson suspect that all was not right, and she had an undefined fear that went towards the truth.

Ten minutes afterwards Arthur started to catch the train. It was arranged that his mother would stay for the day, and he was to return to fetch her in the evening. He would not neglect his business, and remain at Fenge during the day.

Mr. Millard being in a comparatively independent position stayed late at home, in honour of his guest. The young Millards drove to town in a Newport Pagnall cart, with wonderful wheels, and a tall horse, whose pace and action would have tried the nerves of anyone but a horse-breaker or an idiot.

So Arthur, feeling rather alighted, that he had seen so little of Adelaide in the morning, walked to the station alone. Mr. Millard's brougham had been offered to him, but he declined it. Exercise was good for him, and he so rarely got the chance of a country walk, that when he did get the chance he would not lose it.

He saw a lady some distance in advance of him, and by her walk he recognized Miss Millard. Her walk was exceptional in its beauty. Constant and regular exercise, and good habits,

had given her a splendid grace and power. She had none of the bodily indolence or feeble mental languor that, whether real or unreal, seems like affectation.

"Yes," said Arthur, for the hundredth time, "she is like Frances in the grace and dignity of motion—the proud carriage of the pretty head. I see the girl now as she is, free and unaffected, for she does not know that anyone is looking at her—and so her style is natural."

They were in a quiet country lane, and they were the only persons there. Most of the early morning travellers preferred a short cut across the fields to the station, and Arthur could watch the beautiful figure of the girl without interruption. Like a true man, he worshipped the divinity of mind, and like a true man, he admired the beauty of her body.

Adelaide was deep in thought. He saw her take something from her bosom, and then her head was bent as if she were reading. He saw her press something to her lips, and a momentary faltering in her walk told him that she was touched by a strong emotion, and he thought, with some bitterness, that the letter she had kissed was from Percy; the emotion was evoked by her love for him.

Miss Millard looked back, smitten with a sudden fear that she may have been seen; but absent in the lane and a hawthorn bush hid Arthur from her sight. He, however, could see her, and he saw something flutter to the ground.

It was the letter. She had mistaken a stiff fold in her silk dress for the pocket, and so dropped it.

Arthur picked the letter up. It was open, and the words were so few that he could not help reading them at a glance. Had they not have flashed at once upon his sight he would have folded the paper without looking at a syllable.

But that single glance told him the truth. Adelaide was going to the station—to her fate it might be. With such a man as Percy Falkland no fair and innocent woman was safe. Arthur thought that, and the beating of his heart began to quicken. She was going to the station, he was sure; and the result proved that he was right. He stayed a little distance behind, so as not to be seen; but he measured time and distance so well that Adelaide was seated in her carriage when he reached the platform. He sprang into the first compartment he came to, and the train moved on as he did so.

When they arrived in London and left the train, the splendid grace and power of her walk still pointed her out to him. Though she was in the midst of a throng, he did not lose sight of her for an instant. She took a cab, and he took another, telling the driver of his to follow her.

Percy had apartments near Eaton-square, and thither Miss Millard went. Arthur, never losing sight of her, saw her enter a house, and his heart shook with agony at the thought of her peril—a girl in her innocence and loveliness placing herself at the mercy of an unprincipled man.

Only that he had the deepest faith in her he would have gone to the house, and taken her away immediately. Once a painful doubt crossed his mind—Was it the first time she had been to see Mr. Falkland? The doubt was dismissed in a moment. There was nothing less pure than parity in Adelaide's sweet face.

Percy—going rapidly the downward way, sinking deeper into evil as he tried to drown remembrance—had his moments of reflection. He had hardened himself into a belief of Fanny's falsity, and his new passion for Miss Millard made him seek self-extermination by keeping up that belief. In his inmost soul he knew what he would not admit—that Fanny's fault was, at worst, an indiscretion, not a crime.

He would not think of her. He shut her from his mind, and when her image forced itself upon him, he thought with bitterness of

the fatal kiss he had heard. He was right in thinking that it was a kiss given by Arthur and returned by Fanny. But she gave her kiss in purity—in pity for his deep love, in gratitude for his kindness; but it was as pure a kiss as ever sister gave a brother.

Falkland, whose life had been governed by no moral faith or religious feeling—he who had sought nothing but pleasure, no matter what the sacrifice and where the shame, turned sternly and in hard judgment from the girl whose error was such a slight one. Sometimes he was touched by remorse—sometimes he longed to go to her with forgiveness, and see her countenance light up with more than beauty under the tenderness of his caress. But then the remembrance of that kiss would come, and with it the killing thought that she had loved another.

So the days wore on—remorse weakening, doubt strengthened; and all the while the passion for Miss Millard grew more irresistible. "She will be happy with me," he would say when conscience troubled him, "in spite of the world, and I will be faithful to her."

He sent letter after letter, with the deliberate purpose of getting her into his power, and then tempting her to leave England with him. He felt sure that if she came to him his pleading would prevail, and that rather than part for ever she would give up home, and friends, and kindred—trust everything to the honour which he had won.

And the poor girl came. He heard the cab stop, and then heard the timid voice inquire for him in the hall. He looked at himself in the glass, threw into his face the saddest expression he could give it, arranged his dressing-robe with its most graceful effect upon his handsome figure, and then sat down, leaving his forehead on his hand.

The servant tapped and he said, "Come in," in a tone purposely given for Adelaide's ear.

"A lady to see you, sir," said the servant. And he answered, "Let her come in." There was the same tone—the tone of one for whom the world had nothing left.

Miss Millard entered, pale, wistful, expectant; feeling that she had done wrong, yet impelled by her love to think she had done right, in a moment, and with a glad cry, he had clasped her in his arms.

"Adelaide, my darling! Oh! I knew you would come!"

He could not suppress the thrill of wicked exultation in his voice; but to Miss Millard's innocent ear it was a thrill of love, and she kissed him—her eyes full of tears while she kissed him—and never fell purer tokens of purer affection upon a baser traitor's lips.

"And now that we have met, we will not part," he said, seeking his advantage, while her heart was full of emotion. "You will come with me, Adela—you will not doubt me. You will trust to my love—my honour, in spite of the world, in spite of false friends—in spite of those who have wronged me?"

The poor girl could say nothing. The tenderness in his voice, the passion in his face, the closer grip of his arm overpowered her. She did not know in what shape he had done wrong—why or wherefore he was in danger. She was away from home—with him alone, and, influenced by his presence only, the temptation was too powerful.

"In France," he said, "you shall be my wife; and till we reach there you shall be to me as sacred as a star. It is happiness enough if I may see you—kiss your hand—hear you speak. You will come, Adela—you will not leave me!"

The man was acting, but it was the acting of nature. He calculated the effect of every word, though every word came from the passion in his soul; and when his eager glance sought her eyes for a reply, he read there an agony of emotion that told him he had triumphed.

She could not say, "No," though she thought of home, of her mother, and, strange to say, of Arthur Wilson. She almost wished that someone would come to save her in this time.



of passionate trial. Yet there was a against that wish. To part for ever from Percy was to die.

Percy left her for a few minutes; returned dressed; stifled her appealing gaze with his lips; and led her down to the cab.

"To the railway station for Dover," he said. And on they went.

The true and faithful guardian was near. Fortunately for Arthur's purpose, they were strangers to each other; so Percy had no knowledge of the grave young gentleman who stepped into a hansom at the end of the street just as he handed Adelaide in.

And they reached the station. Adelaide, faint from a conflict of emotion, did not lift her eyes; but, clinging to Percy's arm, feeling that this step once taken he was her world for evermore. The tickets were procured by Percy; and the train was at the point of starting. He had her in the carriage with him—head bowed, and her head resting on his shoulder; the guard gave the signal, and Percy said to himself—"Mine, mine!"

And she was nearly lost. Arthur, blocked by a rush of passengers, could not get his ticket; nor break through the crowd. He heard the signal given for the train to start; and then he scattered the people right and left in his passage to the platform. He had not intended to let Percy go so far, but it was too late to prevent him now.

Arthur went without his ticket—the train was in motion; and the guard, just getting into his own van, said,—

"Too late, sir."

But Arthur caught the hand that would have closed the door, and sprang in after the guard.

"Never too late," he said. "It is a matter of more than life and death."

There was no time to expostulate with or turn him out. A sovereign satisfied the guard, and he procured a ticket for Arthur at the first station they stopped at. The train was an express—they were at Dover by midday.

Then, in front of the pier that ran down to the brink of the sea stood the mail packet, waiting for the passengers by that express; and Percy—his heart throbbing with sinful joy, was leading his victim to it, when a heavy hand fell on his shoulders, and a grave voice said,—

"Mr. Percy Falkland, I believe."

He turned white with mingled fear and rage; looked at the grave and noble face, and then said fiercely,—

"No."

Adelaide uttered a little cry, half of fear, half of joy. She had begun to feel her peril.

"Permit me to doubt you," was the cool reply, and Arthur, the stronger and the better of the two, drew Adelaide to him; and whirled Percy away with a quick force that sent him reeling. "I never struck a man in anger yet; but, on my soul, if you attempt to touch this poor innocent child I will strike you down!"

The tone was low, so low that it attracted no attention; but the eye was resolute; and the gentleman a picture of manhood. He had involuntarily thrown his arm round Adelaide's shoulders, as if to shield her from the tempter, and she, very faint and trembling, clung to him, not knowing what to do, or what to say.

"I thought to spare you this bitter truth," said Arthur, very gently. "But, my poor girl, this man is married. Bear it bravely—look at him; and come back with me, and thank Heaven that I came in time!"

## CHAPTER LII.

Percy did not know the gentleman who spoke to him so quietly. Arthur had been careful not to mention his own name till he felt that Adelaide was safe; and when he felt that she was safe, he said,—

"I am Arthur Wilson, Mr. Falkland; and I should like to have a few words with you."

Miss Millard admired him for his quiet manner. Percy hated him for being there; but

he looked at Adelaide and found that she still remained with Arthur. Percy noticed that from the moment Arthur said, "This man is married," Adelaide did not even look at him.

The man felt it bitterly. He was disappointed in his passion—in his sinful love. He felt it the more bitterly when he learned the name of the gentleman who had come between him and the beautiful girl who might have been his victim.

He looked at Mr. Wilson; but the glance was returned with a sad and quiet dignity that put away his anger for the moment. He felt saddened. He was not utterly bad; and perhaps, in his secret heart, he was glad that the girl was saved from him. But there came the savage thought,—

"This is the man who kissed my wife in the passage. This is the man who took Frances from me. This is the man who takes Adelaide from me."

"Mr. Falkland," said the clear and temperate voice of Arthur Wilson; "there are some things I should like to explain, if you will tell me when and where I may see you."

"When and where you please."

Arthur smiled.

"The matter is grave, and we must be dispassionate. The honour of a noble woman is involved—the honour of a good man is involved too."

"Who is the good man?" sneered Percy.

"Yourself, Mr. Falkland. I am patient with you, because I sympathise with you. I knew that, at the outset, when you married Fanny West you had good intentions; and I knew that these intentions have, to some extent, been broken by me."

"Yes," said Percy sadly; "they have."

"When we return," said Arthur, touched by the tone, "I will explain everything; but at present my care is for this lady. Come back with me, or follow me. Here is my card, and you will know where to find me; but this poor girl must not be missed from her home."

It was in Percy's heart to quarrel with the gentleman who had taken possession of Miss Millard. Her hand was on his arm now. She clung to him, and would not look at Percy. Innocent as she was his casuality made her turn from him; and it made her grateful to the man who had saved her.

"Mr. Wilson," she said, lowly; "will you take me home?"

He smiled down upon her tenderly, ignoring Percy's presence.

"Do not fear, Miss Millard; the train returns within ten minutes. We shall be in London by three; at Percy's by four; and your absence will not have been noticed."

"But the shame!" said Adelaide. "I cannot tell a falsehood, Mr. Wilson; and what will they say when they know what I have done?"

"Let me tell your father the whole truth," he said, gently. "He may blame, but he will forgive. Come."

Then he turned to Percy.

"Mr. Falkland."

"Sir."

"I am sorry for you. I am sure that you are sorry for your own badness. Why not do an act of grace? Return to the girl who has been true to you in spite of everything. Miss Millard will forgive you. I forgive you."

"You," said Percy, bitterly.

"I," said Arthur, with the quiet dignity that quite overpowered the other—"I pity you; for you are the victim of a misconception. There never lived a truer, nobler woman than your wife. Go back to her; acknowledge her; give her some recompense for her long time of suffering. Be a man in this case—be simply yourself. I am sure you are not so bad as even you would wish to seem."

Arthur could not have dealt with Percy in a better way had he tried. He spoke frankly, freely, and with that quiet dignity that had its weight, in spite of Percy's dislike to him.

Percy felt that it was useless to contend with such a man. There was no violence in his bearing. He had told the truth, and by his bearing it was certain that he had told the

truth. Percy knew it, and believed it in his soul, but he would not let himself be convinced.

"This man took Fanny from me!" he thought. "This man has taken Adelaide from me, too. And she clings to him as though she had never cared for me."

Arthur and Miss Millard were moving away. Percy followed them. He could not go till he had tried his power once more.

"Adelaide!" he said.

There was no reply. She went on with Mrs. Wilson—her face quite calm in its beauty, though it was very pale.

"For the last time," he said, still following, "speak to me, Adelaide. Don't believe him. Choose now—come with me, or va part for ever."

Arthur glanced at him over his shoulder. Miss Millard did not speak. Her head rested on Arthur's arm, and she knew that she had been saved. The danger, strange to her innocence, was known to her fear. At the very worst she had not imagined Percy so bad as he was. The insults to her faith, the outrage to her love, crushed both; and, though the pain was great, the woman, true to the beauty of a woman's nature, determined to forget him.

Mr. Wilson would not make a scene. His very quietude had quelled Percy, on the irregular temper would have broken out, and there would have been a quarrel that both must have been sorry for. Percy had courage and had not conscience made a coward of him; he would not have given Adelaide up so easily.

"You are Mr. Wilson," he said, savagely.

"Yes."

"Where can I find you?"

"You have my card. In the City from time to time; at home always after the latter time; and, believe me, I would rather meet you as a friend than an enemy."

Percy muttered an impatient oath. The fierce and fiery temper of the man was all but up, and it was ready to display itself, as it would have done, except that he, like Arthur, respected the proprieties, and would not make a scene.

The boat was just about to start, and Falkland had a tigerish rage within him. But for that stately gentleman, who treated him so coolly, he would have been on that boat; and Adelaide with him. He was stricken down in the very moment of his triumph.

He followed Arthur and Miss Millard to the train for London. Though he knew that he had lost her, he had a desperate wish to say something to her—a desperate wish to do something to Arthur. There was no danger in him; but he thought there was for the time.

Miss Millard had been thinking deeply. She thanked Heaven for having sent her a protector, and she shuddered when she saw into what an abyss her infatuation might have plunged her. The truth, the knowledge of Percy's villainy, was a fearful shock. She had loved him very dearly.

But he fell from the pure shining of her heart from the instant that Arthur said, "This man is married." Her eyes were opened. Strong as was her affection for him, the knowledge that he had loved another was more than she could bear.

In the time that passed from the moment when Arthur first spoke to Percy, Miss Millard was in a dead calm—stunned, as it were; though her soul was surging with emotion, she could not speak when Arthur put her into the train and took his seat by her side.

She was white to the lips, and every nerve in her body trembled. Arthur expected what would happen. He spoke to her in a low and gentle voice.

"Miss Millard."

The poor girl looked at him with beseeching eyes, and then fell slowly forward, in a dead faint. She fell into Arthur's arms, her fair hair falling in a golden shower over his shoulder, her white arm dropping helpless round his neck. Had she been a baby he could

not have gathered her to him with more respect and tenderness.

At one of the stations he sent the guard for some brandy as a restorative, and forced it between her lips. The powerful stimulant revived her, and brought back her senses; but she could not at first dismiss the idea that she was still with Percy; and the idea recurred to her with dread.

"You are going to take me home," she said, remembering the whole truth. "But—oh! Mr. Wilson! what will they say to me?"

"Much," was the grave reply; "but it is better to bear their reproaches than your own. Think, my dear Miss Millard, you return home with me, stainless—pure; and had I not been in time you would, in less than another hour, have been going across the Channel, in the power of Mr. Falkland."

Adelaide dropped her head to hide the crimson flush on her cheeks. Arthur took both her hands in his own.

"Every friend I have will turn from me," she said.

"I shall not, Miss Millard. I will be your friend—more than your friend, if you will let me."

The kindness overcame her, and she wept. He was glad to see those tears; and he was glad that while she wept her forehead rested on his shoulder, and she did not shrink from the arm that held her to him.

"But to think that Mr. Falkland could have so deceived me!" she sobbed; "and I loved him very much."

"Forget him, as you must. He is not worth a second thought. Wretched as he has made you, you are happier than the poor girl he has left in pain and poverty—unacknowledged, desolate—the poor girl and her child."

Miss Millard began to be interested, and Arthur, wishing to make her forget her grief, told her the story of Fanny's life, as far as he knew it. He was quite frank with her. He told her of his deep love for Fanny, and all that had happened.

"And you are like her," he said, in conclusion; "as pure as trusting. I could love you for her sake, Miss Millard, and I do love you for your own."

"Mr. Wilson."

The tone was grave, surprised, reproachful, but not pained. He smiled down into her eyes.

"It is true, Miss Millard—Adelaide. May I call you Adelaide?"

"Yes."

"Do you think that you could ever care for me?"

The question went to the depths of her heart, and she found that the grave and handsome gentleman by her side had a large place in those depths. She was not a coquette or a hypocrite. An infatuation for Percy had filled her mind, but there had grown a regard for Mr. Wilson that merged very easily into love.

He had saved her, and she was grateful. But for his kindly aid she could not have gone back even had she repented at the last moment, and refused to accompany Percy on what would have been a fatal journey over the short sea distance between Dover and France. The shame would have kept her away, and left her in Percy's power.

But with Arthur Wilson by her side Adelaide felt strong. He would explain everything—he would take her home. He who had rescued her from dishonour made the return home simple, and her soul, turning from Percy, went towards Arthur in confidence and affection.

"Do you think you could ever care for me?" he asked again; and she answered, with a sigh,—

"I am not worthy of you, Mr. Wilson. What can you think of me after this?"

"Knowing the entire truth, I can only think that one who has loved a bad man so well can love a good man better."

"But you could never respect me."

"I can love you, and do. And if you give me leave to be your guardian I can tell your father that you are mine, and he will not be

angry with you for this indiscretion. Shall it be so?"

Her look was an assent. He drew her to him closely—gently, and held her to his breast.

He saw by the tranquil happiness on her fair face that he was loved at last.

"Will you kiss me?" he asked.

For reply the pretty mouth was upturned to him, and her lips returned the pressure of his. Fanny was not forgotten in that moment of deep joy, for he thought,—

"She is like Frances—as good, as true, as beautiful—and she is mine, the more that I have saved her."

Adelaide lay in his arms quite quiet; that broad chest was a refuge for her; the love that made it heave and fall a safeguard for her happiness. She looked her hand tightly in his, and, trusting to him entirely, was prepared to face her father without fear or shame.

Percy was in the train—six carriages behind them—alone, as they were; but they were happy, and he had the demon of disappointed passion in his soul. He saw them alight when they reached London. He saw them enter a cab together, and what stung him most bitterly of all was, that Miss Millard never once looked at him or for him.

Arthur and Miss Millard were at Penge by five in the afternoon. Adelaide had been missed, and much anxious inquiry made for her; but they were far from suspecting her peril, what it had been. Mr. Millard was considerably surprised to see his child return with Arthur.

But Arthur did not leave him long in doubt. He meant to have no secrecy; leave nothing to be explained; so he answered Mr. Millard's look of inquiry by saying,—

"You are surprised to see us return together?"

"I am," smiled Mr. Millard. "I was not aware you went together, nor did I think Adelaide intended to be absent so long."

Adela had retired, leaving the two gentlemen alone. They entered the breakfast-room, and Millard saw, by the gravity of Arthur's face, that he had something to tell.

Mr. Wilson went quietly into a circumstantial account of the whole matter, beginning with Miss Millard's journey to the station, and his own suspicion of her purpose when he saw her in London.

Millard heard him dumbly. "Wretched girl," he said, angrily, "she has ruined her reputation for ever."

He started up to ring for her, but Arthur caught his arm. "Not an angry word to her, Mr. Millard; not a word to anyone but Mrs. Millard. Remember this—since Adela left your roof this morning she has been in my company. The world can say nothing."

"But it is sure to be known—and what will people think?"

"What they please. It will not matter to you, her father, or to me—her husband."

"Mr. Wilson!"

"Yes," said Arthur, with a tranquil smile, "Adela has promised, and I shall take her in perfect faith. I will not permit a doubt to be looked—even here. The rashness that induced her to take that step grew out of her love for a bad man; and surely she who could love a bad man so well can love a good one better."

"You are a generous fellow," said the stockbroker, taking his hand. "I do not see how Adela can help loving you, and I am sure that you will never reproach her."

"Nor permit her to be reproached. And it is settled—Adela is to be my wife."

"I give her to you gladly, Mr. Wilson. I can say no more, except to thank you for saving her from that rascal, Falkland."

"But I saved her for myself," smiled Arthur. "So you see all men are selfish, after all."

## CHAPTER LIII.

### OUT ON THE RIVER.

It was on the day that Fanny went out to complete the sacrifice of her young existence

to the man who had already caused her so much misery that Arthur rescued Adelaide from Percy Falkland.

Old Bill West, going home after a fruitless search for work, found Fanny absent, and was disappointed. He had taken great pains to keep the truth from her, fearing that she would be troubled if she knew that he was out of work.

So he and Jem went out every morning at the usual time, and returned in the evening at the usual time, as if they had been at work. They kept up the innocent, good-natured artifice for some days.

"We won't trouble her any more, if we can help it," said Mr. West. "Whatever comes, we won't give her cause to go away again; and something's sure to turn up soon—eh, Jem?"

Jem said "Yes" with a sullenness meant for the Falklands, and not for his father. The lad had a revengeful feeling against the people who had added injustice to injury, and he had many a time pondered how he could be revenged.

On this evening, when they returned, old Bill asked for Fanny, and was told by his wife that she had just run out, but not for long, as the door was left open.

"And you may be sure," said Mrs. West, "if she had meant to be long, she would have taken baby with her."

Just then baby woke up and began to cry. Mr. West lumbered up stairs instantly, and took the little one from its cot. He quieted it by a walk to and fro in the room, and in that walk he saw the letter on Fanny's table.

"Mother," he said, lumbering down again, with the letter in his hand, and baby on his shoulder, "you had better look at this. Little Alf's got me so tight round the neck that I can't do it myself."

Mrs. West opened the folded paper, and spelled the words out slowly. Her look frightened the carpenter. He saw her tremble and fall into a chair. Stricken with a terrible fear, he said,—

"What's the matter, mother?"

"Oh, William! our poor girl's gone to make away with herself!"

The carpenter, with a white calm on his face, put the child down, and read the letter for himself. He got up without a word, and calling for Jem, went out.

He was so accustomed to have Jem trudging by his side that he felt stronger for Jem's company; and a few brief words, as they went along, told the lad all. And Jem swore a terrible oath, that if anything happened to his sister, he would burn the Falklands out of house and home.

They searched for Fanny everywhere; walked London through, and West would have inquired of the police if Jem had not suggested that the police would not know Fanny from anyone else. They went on their hopeless errand, heavy-hearted, desponding, and midnight came before their tired footsteps took them home.

There were no tidings there. Jem went out again—alone; and by the merest chance went towards Westminster-bridge.

Had he been five minutes sooner he might have seen and saved his sister; but it was fated they were not to meet just then. Jem passed over the bridge, while Fanny stood at the bottom of the steps.

A young workman out for the night, because, being out of employ, he could afford no lodging, stood leaning idly over the bridge, when, glancing by chance towards the wharves, he saw the pale face of Fanny in the moonlight, and instantly suspecting her intention, he ran to the steps.

"Some poor girl going to drown herself," he thought. "Got no home, perhaps, like me, or tired of life. I hope I shall not be too late."

But he was. Fanny, startled by his footfall, and determined to carry out her purpose, uttered a last faint prayer, and threw herself



into the river. The tide was running strongly, and it took her away in a moment. The young man sprang after her, regardless of the danger to himself.

"Help?" he said, as he plunged in. "A woman drowning!"

The cry startled a few solitary passers-by, a policeman, the proprietor of a baked potato-can, and Mr. Percy Falkland, returning at the moment from one of his haunts of dissipation. The policeman could not swim—the man with the potato-can would not run the risk of losing his property, and Mr. Falkland had drunk too much to care whether a woman was drowned or not. He was in a state of savage callousness and pitied no one.

The gallant fellow in the river had to do his noble work alone. Fanny sank once, and the second time he had to dive after her. He caught her, and made for the steps, though the heavy waters tried their best to drag him back. He would not have gained a footing had not the policeman been there to help him.

"Poor girl!" said the young man. "I am afraid it's all over with her. Put her down gently, policeman—as gently as you can."

They laid her on the pavement—the young man resting her head on his knee, the policeman holding his light on her face; and Percy, with a strange chill at his breast, mastered his emotion, so that he could say quietly,—

"Is she dead?"

"Quite dead, poor thing!" said the workman. "She struck her head as she went in, and the first plunge did the rest."

(To be continued.)

THERE is a desire to light all the cathedrals and large churches by electricity; as that would lessen danger from fire it is most desirable. Canterbury was about to set the good example, but has failed in doing so from want of funds.

THE future is always fairyland to the young. Life is like a beautiful and winding lane, on either side bright flowers, and beautiful butterflies, and tempting fruits, which we scarcely pause to admire and to taste, so eager are we to hasten to an opening which we imagine will be more beautiful still.

"GLASS HOUSES."—The old saying, "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones," originated at the union of the crowns, when London was for the first time inundated with Scotchmen. Jealous of their invasion, the Duke of Buckingham organized a movement against them, and parties were formed for the purpose of breaking the windows of their abodes. By the way of retaliation, a number of Scotchmen smashed the windows of the duke's mansion, known as the "Glass House." Martin's-fielde, and on his complaining to the king, his majesty replied:—"Steenie, Steenie, those who live in glass houses should be carefu' how they fling staines."

PETTY ANNOYANCES.—To be a good house-keeper, a woman must learn to rise superior to petty annoyances. If every woman would set before her as an aim that is worthy of all that is strongest and best in her, to conduct a well-ordered home, a good deal of happiness and real beauty would be gained. How many faces, once lovely, are transformed by the addition of those wicked little lines about the eyes and mouth, which come from having fretted over necessary work?—work, too, which, if properly engaged in, would not injure the doer. There is absolutely no use in fretting over petty annoyances, and since the danger of falling into this habit is great, every sensible woman will endeavour to look on the bright side of all her troubles. Suppose the baked potatoes should be eaten the moment they are done, and an important member of the family, knowing the dinner hour is late; do not worry over the matter; every such little worry indulged in is like a chisel deepening the lines already formed by some real trouble. Everybody, it is feared, knows women who never

seem really to rouse up to enjoy anything, unless it is a misfortune, and who remind their guests of the dinner Charles Lamb describes, where roast lady was served with every course.

#### HATS.

HATS were discovered about the time they capped the climax, as this is the first intimation we have of any head-covering.

One of the pleasantest ways to get a hat is to bet one with another fellow and lose it, and then the other fellow gets it. This recipe is intended for the other fellow.

On going into a house leave your hat in the hall on the rack, especially if there are more there, as this enables you to select one of the best as you go out. The old-fashioned way of carrying bricks in a hod was for some time obsolete, the hat being generally used. Of course the wear-and-tear on the hat is greater with this than the old way, more especially if the lamp-post gets away from you, and the hat manages to fall underneath. And, in connection with the above, it may be remarked that the more light-headed a man appears the more people suspect there are bricks in his hat.

Hats are sometimes used to make omelettes in, but for this it is necessary to be familiar with the different stages and changes which occur, and also to know "eggsactly" how to do it. Hats are sometimes musical; a display of this peculiarity rarely fails to create considerable amusement. Whenever there is enough air, the hatband will usually precede the man at a proper distance until the wind gives out. The time is usually lively, the man selecting the double-quick. When you come home at night with the top of your high hat on the top of your head, the brim all gone and the band hanging around your neck, your safest excuse is "Have been to the club."

#### SLIPPERY STREETS.

THERE are some evils we seem to ignore and nuisances we tolerate apparently on principle, though what principle it is difficult to conjecture.

The slipperiness of the London streets has been notorious from times so far past as to be forgotten. Recently, however, the fact has been demonstrated in a fashion peculiarly offensive.

The long continuance of miserably wet and foggy weather has rendered the surface of the metropolitan area, as it has made most other surfaces, especially slimy. It is now really a feat in gymnastics to maintain the perpendicular in not a few of the more crowded thoroughfares of London.

Where the pavements are narrow or slope a little, the attention required to avoid "striking up," as they say of horses, is considerable and annoying. This is a disgraceful state of matters.

It is idle to talk of putting the law in force to compel householders to sweep before their doors. Not a few of the worst places are opposite blank walls.

Indeed, if one part of a street were thoroughly cleaned it would be quickly smeared with greasy mud brought from other parts, or the roadway; unless, indeed, it should occur to any one to put the law in force against "authorities" responsible for keeping the streets proper in a passable condition.

It is useless to remonstrate; but it ought to be put on record that the pavements and carriage-ways of London are probably at this moment in a more neglected and execrable condition than they have ever before been, despite all the improvements, and in spite of the large sums of money extracted from the pockets of the ratepayers to cleanse away the filth that is allowed to accumulate, and to put an end to the nuisance, which not only remains but increases.

Many a sprained ankle, "jarred" spine, and "shocked" nervous system attest the mischievous nature of the nuisance we tacitly tolerate.—*Lancet*.

#### OUR GUESTS.

THE door of being stands ajar,  
And guests will come and go;  
And sometimes we can scarcely tell  
The true friend from the foe;  
Thus must we, who would honour gain,  
Be careful whom we entertain.

And as there is no bolt or bar,  
No secret lock and key,  
'Twere best (to keep the traveller out  
Who bringeth misery),  
That back and forth a guard should pace  
Before the heart's abiding-place.

And he should bear the sword of truth,  
And sing a martial song,  
Of love and loyalty to Right,  
And hatred to the Wrong;  
And turn all evil thoughts away  
Before they spoil our golden day.

Before they grow and blossom out,  
Like rank and useless weeds,  
And turn from only evil thoughts  
To vain or evil deeds.  
Ah! such a guard before each door  
Should conscience be for evermore.

Then we should gather round our hearth  
Sweet Faith and Hope and Love;  
Then Peace, with her attendants all,  
About our home would move—  
Peace-angels, brightening room and hall,  
And mingling honey with the gall.

Ah! we may live a happy life,  
Despite of strife and care,  
For God hath made the bounteous earth  
And sky surpassing fair;  
If we, amidst our joy and pain,  
Be careful whom we entertain.

K. M.

#### "IF ONLY."

##### CHAPTER XXXV.

FOUND.

WHEN Frank Beverley left that lonely grave in the churchyard at Nice his heart was frozen, and he obeyed mechanically, the cravings of nature—eating, drinking and sleeping—because these were needful to sustain life.

"Better bury myself," he thought, "in the wilds of Africa, or in the trackless forests of South America, than to linger on among my fellows with no higher aim in life than that of obeying the call of duty, which, after all, is a mere sentiment."

So he reasoned with himself, feeling that with Vera's supposed death his life would henceforth be aimless and purposeless, and more than once despair entered his heart, and he contemplated suicide.

But he was no coward to take the priceless gift of life with his own hand, and by resisting the temptation his moral courage was strengthened, and he turned his face resolutely towards France, where, amid dangers and privations, he hoped to find an opiate to lull his troubled mind to rest.

He managed to join the French army in front of Paris, guided there by a peasant, to whom he gave a large gratuity.

He now found plenty of scope for his skill as a surgeon; and the cloud was lifted off his heart by dint of sheer hard work.

He often longed to throw down the lancet and seizing the sword, to rush into the thick of the sanguinary fray; perchance, to meet a glorious death.

But the quarrel was not his, and to have shed blood would, with him, have been simple murder; so he toiled on, earnestly endeavouring to save life instead of taking it.

One day some *franc-tireurs* brought in a wounded comrade, and placed him under Frank's care.

"To his surprise one of them spoke to him in English, saying,—

"Am I not speaking to Mr. Beverley?"

"Yes," was the quick reply, as Frank mortified the speaker's face. "I have a faint recollection of seeing you somewhere before. May I ask where?"

"I am Cotswold, and you looked in upon me once at my chambers respecting your wife."

At this moment Frank was called away to attend a most urgent case, and thus lost an opportunity of learning that Vera still lived.

The state of Paris at this time was simply terrible.

Shells crashed into houses, dealing death and destruction to men, women, and children alike; in fact, nowhere was one safe from the sudden visitations of that black angel who hovered over the devoted city, snatching his prey indiscriminately, and with the suddenness of the swoop of an eagle.

Famine, too, began to make its grasp felt; food was scarce, and gaunt men and women, and hungry children, wandered about fearing death in search of food.

As Count Bismarck put it, the people of Paris were like a kid suckling in its mother's milk; and iron missiles, and thousands of gleaming bayonets, kept them within the fatal zone, from which there was no escape.

Strange as it might appear, Violet and her father, whom we had left so comfortable at the Towers, had come to Paris, and managed to enter it; thanks to his great influence with the German commander, Count Moltke, who was an old friend of his.

It came about in this way: Violet had heard through Mr. Honeywood, to whom Cotswold had written, she having been debarred from communicating direct with the inmates of Elderton Towers, that the man she loved, and who was always in her thoughts, had gone abroad to serve as a *franc tireur* in the French army.

From that moment she read the papers with secret avidity up in little Robin's nursery, and her heart turned sick at the accounts of privations, sufferings, and death, which met her eyes in their pages.

She was filled with horror and dismay at the treatment these brave guerillas—noble patriots—received at the hands of the implacable Germans; and her vivid imagination conjured up the most harrowing scenes of executions, in which Robert was always the central figure; in fact, he was slain over and over again; until almost refused to visit her at night, and she visibly drooped, the roses left her cheeks, her eyes blazed with the fire of fever, and she became querulous, nervous and irritable.

Her father becoming alarmed called in a most skillful physician, who, from questions adroitly put, diagnosed her complaint, and pronounced it mental rather than physical; and looked so grave that her father feared he would lose his only child, the idol of his heart; rather than this he gave way to her importunities at last, and consented to accompany her to Paris.

A person in this exalted position found no difficulty in procuring letters of introduction from our Foreign Office, and within a short space of time Violet started on her Quixotic mission of finding Cotswold, forgetting that, for aught she knew, he might have been drafted into the Army of the Loire, which was then trying to retrieve the fortunes of France under Gambetta.

The journey had one good effect, however—it brought rest to her fevered frame, and the roses stole again into her wan face, and her old vivacity of manner returned.

Her only regret at leaving home was that Robin was there, and would miss her very much; but he was in good hands—those of Mrs. Thorpe, the housekeeper; and Mr. Honeywood promised to look in daily and inquire about him.

Quite a staff of mounted messengers were to be kept in readiness by day and night to

gallop off for all the doctors in the neighbourhood should Robin show signs of ailing by day or night; in fact, he had left the most absurd instructions about the way in which he was to be attended to, which, if carried out, must have brought him to an untimely end through sheer kindness.

Lord Elderton and Violet arrived in the German lines, and were not far from Vera, without, however, dreaming that such was the case; for they supposed that she was in Paris, whither she had fully intended going.

Vera little knew that her friends, whom she would have greeted with great joy, were forwarded with the very flag of truce which was sent to ascertain news of her husband.

Fate seemed to be playing a cruel game of hide and seek with the personages of this story, for Cotswold had taken service under an assumed French name, and could not be traced.

About this time the *candale* of Paris, incited by revolutionary agents, began to make their presence felt, under the plea of establishing a commune.

Turbulent spirits, these, bent upon anarchy and disorder, instead of putting forth all their energies to fight a common foe.

No city could have been in worse straits, with an enemy within and without her gates, afflicted by the sword, pestilence, and famine.

Fabulous prices were given for food, and those who had no money were fain to live upon garbage, and to descend into the sewers in search of vermin.

It was dangerous to possess food in any large quantity, and one unfortunate baker had his shop stormed by the mob, who fought and tore like hungry tigers over the spoil.

Everybody who offended the mob was at once hunted to death as a German spy, until people began to fear the violence of Frenchmen more than they did the shells of the Germans whirled about the city.

One day, Frank Beverley was passing by a once fashionable quarter of Paris, when the shrieks of women and children and the thunder of an exploded shell arrested his attention, and thinking help might be needed he entered.

Judge of his surprise when his eyes rested on Violet, who was calm and brave in the midst of the confusion, and attending to her father, who had received a slight wound on the right forearm, from a fragment of the ponderous missile.

Without any ceremony Frank at once took Lord Elderton in hand, and bandaged the wounded limb.

"I hardly expected to meet my companion of the Welsh mountains in this place," Frank remarked smiling, "don't you remember our adventure, Miss Elderton?"

"Of course I do; you are Vera's husband; where is she?"

"Alas! dead!"

"Great Heavens! dead!" she cried, with a piteous pale as death itself, "impossible. When did it happen?"

"I cannot fix the exact date, but it happened at Nice."

"My poor darling," said Violet, bursting into tears, and fully believing Frank's statement, so circumstantially made.

When she became calmer she noticed how the news had affected her father.

He was like a dazed man with a mute look of anguish in his eyes, as if Vera's supposed death was like an iron that had entered into his very soul.

Frank stayed for sometime with his newly-found friends, and in the course of conversation Violet asked him if he had heard of an Englishman named Cotswold, that had taken service with the *franc tireurs*.

"Yes," he replied, "I met him some weeks back."

"Oh joy!" she cried, "he is found; papa, do you not hear that Robert is alive and well?"

"But Vera is dead," was the sad reply. "I helped to drive her from the shelter of my home; oh, Heavens! how I am punished."

But Violet in a few words stated the case to

Frank, fearing lest her father's utterances might convey a wrong impression to his mind.

"I will ascertain particulars for you, Miss Elderton, regarding your friend Cotswold; there is a comrade of his under my care, who will, no doubt, be able to give me every information; expect me this afternoon."

Such was her impetuosity that but for her father's condition she would have insisted upon accompanying Beverley to the hospital.

She waited anxiously for his return, little dreaming of the awful peril that was encompassing her father.

He had wandered into the street, and from his strange manner of looking about excited the suspicions of a mob of ruffians, one of whom addressed him, and to whom he made a vague and seemingly treasonable remark.

These fellows, who dared not go to the ramparts to fight the foe, had yet a thirst for blood upon them, and perceiving their opportunity mobbed his unfortunate lordship, and hurried him off, denouncing him as a spy.

News of this was brought to Violet just as Frank Beverley entered.

"Oh, sir," she cried, seizing his arm, "save my dear father."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THROUGH THE SNOW.

WHEN Vera recovered consciousness she found herself in one of the hospital beds, attended by some of her lady friends, to whom she had endeared herself by her gentle winning ways and her assiduous attention to her duties.

"What has happened?" she asked, placing her hand to her forehead, as if to gather her scattered thoughts together.

Then, before anyone could reply, she added, as her brain regained activity, and her mind resumed its sway,—

"Ah! I remember those horrid tides, and he, Robert Cotswold, standing before them; where is he, poor fellow? Did I save him? Oh, I hope I do, for it would break Violet's heart if he were dead."

She had only a hazy recollection of the almost tragic affair; and did not realize yet that her heroism had snatched Cotswold from the very jaws of death.

"I am here, dear Mrs. Beverley," he said, coming forward. "You saved my life, and I can never be sufficiently grateful, nor can I ever repay the great service you have rendered me."

"Thank Heaven!" she said, fervently, as she rose and took his outstretched hand; "but, Mr. Cotswold, I gave the king a promise on your behalf that you would return to England the first opportunity. You will keep it for my sake, will you not?"

"And leave you here exposed to danger?" he said, reproachfully.

"Do not fear for me, but return to the Towers and give my love to dear Violet, and kind remembrances to her father."

They were alone in the hut, Vera's friends having considered it with drawn, so they could speak without reserve.

Vera was seated in an arm-chair, looking pale, but very happy at the knowledge that her efforts had been successful.

Cotswold had never possessed such interest in her eyes as now—she forgot the past, and the daring he had evinced in pursuing her at a time when she was defenceless and at his mercy, and was ready to give him the affection of a sister, for dear little Violet's sake.

Perceiving that he hesitated to answer she said gently,—

"Mr. Cotswold; I respect your scruples about visiting the Towers; but I am sure Lord Elderton is too noble not to forget and forgive, as freely as I have; besides, I shall not be happy till I say good-bye, and see you start for dear old England."

"Do you not know?" he asked, "have you not heard that Violet and her father are at this moment in Paris?"



"Impossible!" was her astonished reply. "I only knew it myself through overhearing a conversation while I was a prisoner; they were passed through under a flag of truce."

"How dreadful! they must be in great danger; what is to be done?"

"Join them," he said, quickly.

"How? I have already failed in my attempt to get into Paris where my husband is at present."

"I met him," he reminded.

"Was he well?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes, but looked overworked; he is a noble fellow, and worthy of the highest esteem and respect. I wish we could get into the city somehow; I shall be miserable thinking of what might happen, and you must feel the position acutely."

"I do indeed; how rash it was of dear Violet and her father to rush madly into danger; but I can guess why it was done, cannot you, Mr. Cotswold?"

"Violet was always impulsive," he remarked, "but her father ought to have placed a curb upon her."

"Cannot you understand that where a woman loves as Violet does, she will risk everything for the object of it; are you still blind, Mr. Cotswold? It was for your sake she did this rash act."

"It is another reason, then, that I should be near them to share their danger, and to avert it if possible. I cannot return to England and desert them, who, as you say, have perilled everything for my unworthy sake."

No stranger conversation than this could have taken place, for the scene was one so inappropriate to such a theme as love—men were engaged in deadly conflict, and mingling with the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry, came the deadly growl of the *mitrailleuse* awakening the echoes, and answering defiance to the shouts of the combatants, and the cries of the wounded.

Chaos had come again, and Titans appeared intent upon uprooting the very foundations of the earth, which shook and trembled, as if hidden fires were ready to burst forth and wrap everything in one great fiery wave of destruction.

But nothing can damp the passions of human nature when once fairly aroused, and men, with the lust of blood upon them, would have fought desperately, even had the last great trumpet sounded in their ears.

Cotswold had presented a puzzling problem for Vera's solution, who sympathized with his anxiety to join their friends, but could not well advise him how to act.

At this moment Count Moltke appeared in the doorway, and, saluting Vera, said,—

"Madam, I congratulate you upon your friend's safety, and the king has commanded me to express admiration of your brave conduct. Luckily, for this gentleman, he found in you an irresistible advocate, but his majesty would like him to leave the camp as quickly as possible."

"Pardon me, your excellency," said Cotswold, "but it is impossible for me to leave the shores of France."

"Would you trifle with the royal clemency?" the Count asked, a deep frown darkening his massive brow.

"You mistake me," was the calm rejoinder; "I am deeply sensible of the king's clemency, but there are those within the walls of Paris whom I dare not leave whilst they remain in deadly peril. I refer to my kinsfolk, Lord Elderton and his daughter."

"Who are also very dear friends of mine," Vera observed, as she looked with pleading wistfulness into the kind but worn face of this the greatest general of the age, who played with anxiousness a delicate chess-player with his puppets.

"Lord Elderton is also a very old friend of mine," said the Count. "I am pleased to meet you, sir, for this sake; rely upon me doing all I can to further your interests, but I fear the king is inflexible; had you appeared in

any other character than that of a *franc tireur* I should have a better chance of succeeding."

"I also wish to join my husband," said Vera; "you cannot imagine the intense anxiety I have suffered on his behalf; do, I beg, plead for us, for this gentleman more especially; the favour will earn our lasting and deepest gratitude."

Vera, in her eagerness, had risen, and placed her small white hand on the Count's arm, and looked appealingly into his face, over which there had stolen a sweet smile.

Raising her hand to his lips he said,—

"I will do my best, madame, for your sake, for you have worked nobly and well in saving the sons of our German Fatherland; we owe you a debt of gratitude, which I will repay, if possible."

He took his leave, promising to return with the king's answer, but was not very hopeful of its proving favourable.

"I will take my chances," Cotswold remarked; "you they cannot very well refuse. I shall make my way into Paris somehow."

"Do not throw away your life," she pleaded, "this precious now both to your child and others; you will promise me this much, will you not?"

"I can refuse you nothing," he replied, "but you have set me a hard task. I love excitement, and the dangers I have passed through have braced up my nerves and made a man of me at last. In a few hours we may be separated, and I have one act of preparation to make you, which I do gladly. It will surprise you to learn that I am a kinsman of yours."

"Of mine?" she asked, in astonishment.

"Yes, and half my estates are yours by right of law."

"You astound me; how long have you known this?"

"Ever since our first meeting almost. I own with shame that I did not confess it then, but I do so now willingly. My lawyer has received instructions to communicate all particulars to you and to make restitution. How despicable I must appear in your eyes, Mrs. Beverley. Better far had you let me die. I can never hope to redeem my character in your eyes, or to meet your husband as a friend. When he knows all he will justly despise me."

To a proud nature like Cotswold's it was the extreme of humiliation to make such a confession to a woman whom he had sought to wrong; nay! even to degrade.

In his calmer moments he had reviewed this past life in connection with Vera, and felt that no approach could be bitter enough from her lips, and he now stood before her waiting to hear his sentence of banishment from not only her presence, but her whole future.

Her own faults, however, had taught her the great and holy lesson of charity; and far from feeling resentment, she had nothing but pity for one who, in trying to wreck her life, must have sunk with her to even lower depths.

She had commenced her life, as a wife, by bitterly retaliating upon her husband, without affording him time for explanation; and had believed him guilty of the basest motives, and thrust herself out of his life in the pride of her heart, exposing both herself and him to manifold and great temptations, through which she had narrowly passed, but not without inflicting misery and unhappiness upon others.

"Let those who are without sin cast the first stone," was the motto she had learnt to respect and practice; how then could she upbraid Cotswold with bitter reproaches when she herself had deprived Frank Beverley of his rights as a husband, leaving him to "bear the scorn and secret contumely of friends—to lead a lonely life, unloved, unshared for?"

With a sweet smile she held out her hand as a token of forgiveness, just as of old the royal sceptre was extended to criminals as an assurance of pardon, and said,—

"Have I not told you that the past is blotted out? We must forget and forgive in this life,

Mr. Cotswold, even seventy times seven, if we hope to be pardoned above."

Tears welled into his eyes—tears of manly contrition and gratitude, which did him no shame, but came from a heart cleansed by a woman's forgiveness, as he said, in a voice broken by emotion,—

"You are an angel, to whom I owe not only life but reformation. It will be my earnest endeavour to be worthy of your friendship and esteem. May Heaven bless you, and your whole life be one of unalloyed happiness."

"May your prayer be answered," she said, fervently; "not only for myself, but for Frank."

At this moment Count Moltke greeted them again, saying, with a smile,—

"His Majesty can deny you nothing, madam; in fact, he is half afraid of your pleadings, and expects next that you will ask him to raise the siege of Paris; you and your friend will be passed through our lines to-night, but I warn you that your danger will then commence, for we cannot furnish you with the French parole and counter-siege, without which their sentries may fire upon you."

"I am willing to risk it," said Vera, quickly, "and have to thank your Excellency and his most gracious Majesty for so great a boon."

"As have I," said Cotswold; "and I pledge my word, as a gentleman, to remain neutral."

"When the war is over," said the Count, "we may all meet again. Pray give my kindest regards to my old friend, Lord Elderton, and accept, madam, the expression of the king's highest esteem for your services, and the thanks of the whole German army to which you have proved yourself a kind devoted friend."

After mutual adieus the noble soldier, who by the sword had done much to cement German unity, took his leave, having deeply impressed Vera and her companion with his many excellent qualities.

The snow covered the earth like a thick mantle, and a biting frost seemed to strike to the very marrow, bone, as it was, on the keen north wind, which made the sentries shiver on their lonely posts, as they paced to and fro, guarding the safety of the respective armies.

Overhead the sky was dark with heavy snow clouds, and not a single star was visible, whilst in the distance the ramparts of Paris loomed dimly, and ever and anon a shell burst with a loud explosion, its light through the air being marked by the burning fuse, presenting the appearance of a streak of light.

Around the watch fires German soldiers sat, or stood, singing patriotic songs, and their voices blended harmoniously in that, to them, popular hymn, "The Watch on the Rhine;" then the wearied legions sank to rest, and sleep, that counterfeiter of death, sealed their heavy eyes, leaving them to dream of smiling vineyards, peaceful homes, in Germany, where many a loved one bent the knee in prayer for their safety.

Vera's last good-byes had been said, and she and Cotswold took their way, under care of an escort, towards the front, hoping that ere long they would reach Paris in safety.

A hoarse challenge of sentries came with startling effect upon Vera's ears; but the friendly answer to the stern demand allowed them to pass in safety.

"Take care of yourselves," said the German officer, as he bade them good night. "You have a dangerous gauntlet to run. I wish you both God-speed."

"Do you feel at all timid, Mrs. Beverley?" Cotswold asked, as they went forward through the snow, which was hard and crisp, and crunched under foot like so much brushwood.

"Not a bit," she replied; "there can be no danger to speak of; surely they will not fire at us when they perceive that we are alone and unarmed."

"Please keep behind me," he said, after a pause, "you will run less risk; not for worlds would I have any harm happen to you."



["GREAT HEAVENS! VERA DEAD," CRIED VIOLET; "WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?"]

A distance of half a mile brought them within ken of the French outposts; for, although the sky was overcast, the snow permitted objects to be seen distinctly.

"Halt!" Cotswold whispered, suddenly; "one of the sentries is aiming at us."

"Speak to him," she said, hurriedly, peering ahead as she spoke, and catching sight of a kneeling figure behind a breastwork of snow.

"We are friends of France," Cotswold cried, "but we do not know the parole, or counter-sign."

There was an anxious pause, during which the pair expected to hear the report of the sentry's rifle, and the ping of a bullet.

But several minutes passed, and nothing happened, save that the soldier still knelt, with the rifle at the present, as if in the act of firing.

"Come on," said Cotswold; "we had better advance, for he makes no sign, nor does he attempt to challenge us."

Making a circuit they came upon the sentry, who was still and motionless, as if cut out of stone.

"There's something wrong here," said Cotswold, as he drew a bullseye lantern from under his cloak; and he flashed it upon the man's face, which was set and rigid, and the eyes fixed and staring.

"Frozen to death," said Cotswold. "Poor fellow; he has died at his post with his face to the foe."

Vera shuddered as she saw the terrible sight, and the expression upon the dead man's face haunted her for many a day to come.

Snow now began to fall heavily, accompanied by half a gale, and soon obscured their vision, as they continued to advance.

Cotswold now took Vera's hand, and led her on, keeping straight ahead without guide or compass, hopeful of reaching succour of some kind at last.

"*Qui vive!*" said a voice close by.

"Friends," was Cotswold's prompt reply. "We have escaped from the German lines."

"Halt. You are my prisoners," said the sentry, coming forward and seizing Cotswold, who said,—

"My friend, there is no occasion to arrest us, we are harmless. Please do not terrify this lady."

"You must remain here," was the stern reply, "until the relief arrives. You can then explain matters to the officer."

There was no help for it but to obey, and Vera had to stand in the piercing cold and blinding snowstorm for more than half-an-hour, until her delicate frame was almost numbed with the frost, and but for Cotswold's friendly flask of brandy she must have succumbed.

At last the sound of subdued voices was heard, followed by the appearance of the relief. Cotswold, who spoke French like a native, told his tale to the officer, and begged that he would spare one of his men to conduct them to a place of shelter for Vera's sake.

With the proverbial gallantry of his nation the officer at once assented, and ordered two of his men to guide the pair to the nearest quarters.

Vera's limbs were so stiffened by the cold that she could scarcely walk at first; but she had a brave heart and struggled on with Cotswold's aid, who was most anxious on her account.

After missing their way several times, owing to the blinding storm, the party reached a farmhouse which served as the headquarters of the outposts.

Here every attention and civility was shown her, and blankets and greatcoats were spread for her near a blazing wood fire, which was fed with articles of costly furniture, and with doors and window-frames.

She soon became drowsy and fell into a

deep sleep, from which she did not awaken till the sun had risen.

Coffee and rye bread and a few hard biscuits were all the soldiers had to offer her for breakfast, but she partook of the humble fare with relish, and felt much refreshed and able to resume her journey.

She felt thankful when she entered the gates of Paris with Cotswold, and her heart beat high with hope at the prospect of being reunited to her husband and of seeing dear Violet once more.

(To be continued.)

A VERY commendable movement is on foot with regard to the rebuilding of the block of houses burnt down in Wood-street. All the owners are being invited to meet and to form their offices into a great quadrangle with a court after the French fashion, which will set a new fashion in city architecture. The space saved by having all the lifts on the outside, the advantage of each floor being fire-proof, and the advantage to the city of work being done in quadrangles instead of in the streets, are put forth as good reasons for the proposed new combination.

FLEET-STREET and its precincts are rich in old associations, but the discovery in Bouverie-street makes a remarkable addition to our treasures. The workmen engaged in pulling down some old buildings have found the remains of the monastery of Whitefriars. There is the remnant of a tower, which served as a foundation for many houses, and it is hoped that deeper down stone coffins will be discovered. The White Friars or Carmelite monks, who claimed succession from Elijah, founded this monastery in 1245. A thorough investigation may reveal even more interesting relics than are anticipated, and all the antiquarians will be agog.





[“HERE COMES THE DUCHESS,” CRIED ADELAIDE; “WHAT SHALL WE DO?”]

## NOVELETTE.]

## A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE.

## CHAPTER I.

“Nor love you—oh! Captain Vavasour!” And she lifted her lovely, reproachful eyes to the other's face. “I can't help myself.”

“That is a real woman's reason,” he answered, laughing; “which means it is no reason at all. Do you know why you love me?”

“No,” replied Delia, hesitatingly. She longed to say,—“Because you are so kind, and handsome, and quite different to any man who ever wooed me before,” but she was too shy to manage such a long sentence, and, moreover, she had a feeling that if she said half what she felt it would sound like flattery.

“Well, then shall, I tell you?” he asked, taking her face between the palms of his hands and so lifting her lips to his.

“If you please.”  
“Because I love you, and there is a subtle sympathy between people under these circumstances which attracts heart to heart, soul to soul.”

This was very fine Delia knew, but somehow it made her shyer than ever, because she did not understand it.

She was only a simple little country maiden, born a long way out of the great world whose wicked ways her companion knew only too well. She had all the grace and sweetness of a wild flower in the hedge, but there were heaps and heaps of things she did not know, and it was only when Captain Vavasour came to lodge at the farm-house she recognized her ignorance and began to mind it. And now Delia would have given ten years of her innocent life to be a fine lady, and have creamy hands, flashing with diamond rings, and a

waist that you could span. Only, she told herself, Captain Vavasour had begun to love her as she was, and if she were different his love might be different too, so that it was as well to remain as she was.

Captain Vavasour had come to Dibthorp ostensibly to fish, and he certainly did pass several hours of each day stretched full length on the banks of the river, basking in the sun. If the boat bobbed it went on bobbing until the fish had managed to get free again, for he never seemed to trouble about it, and Delia, who would steal out to keep him company when her work was done, would sometimes wonder why he put his rod in at all—just as she wondered why he had come to Dibthorp at all.

For it was not a lively place by any means, and what little distraction he might have had he did not seem to care about. Sir Charles Trevelyan, at the Hall, left his card, and Captain Vavasour waited until he had seen him drive past one day to return the visit, and declined the invitation to dinner that immediately followed.

Altogether he was an enigma to Mrs. Ambrose and her daughter, and fair Delia was becoming too much interested in the solution for her peace of mind.

Mrs. Ambrose had a pretty farmhouse just outside of the village. Her husband had left it to her unconditionally, and as she was a capable woman she at once took his vacant place, and carried it on so well, that she was putting by a little every year for her two daughters.

Marah, the elder, who was clever, and had been well educated, passed a good part of the year in London with her godmother—a Mrs. Lane, the widow of a solicitor. She found Dibthorp dull, and liked chimneys, she said; whilst Delia, who loved flowers and animals, was glad to be with her mother, and once, when she went to stay in Blackenburg-square, in Marah's place, seemed so thoroughly wretched Mrs. Lane was thankful to see

the last of her, and determined never to ask her again.

Mrs. Ambrose never despised any honest way of making money, and therefore she was glad to let her pretty parlour, and the best bedroom when she could find a lodger. Of course the furniture was not grand, but everything was so spotlessly clean and fresh, and Delia waited so pleasantly, and looked so pretty, she generally did get a lodger, and so added something to the little nest-egg accumulating for her girls.

But, of course, it was not in the programme that this lodger should flirt with Delia, and Mrs. Ambrose was so totally unprepared for any such contingency, she was absolutely horror-struck when a neighbour told her one day she had seen Delia in the lanes with Captain Vavasour, and they looked exactly as if they were courting.

“Courting? Rubbish!” exclaimed Mrs. Ambrose in her quick, decided way, “It isn't likely that a gentleman such as he would care for a country girl like my Delia.”

Nevertheless, directly she was alone with the girl she questioned her eagerly; and Delia, with tears and blushes, confessed that she loved Captain Vavasour with all her heart, and had reason to suppose he loved her.

“You foolish little girl,” returned Mrs. Ambrose, with pain and dismay, “can't you see that he is far above such as us?”

“Yes, I know, mother, but gentlemen do sometimes marry girls who are not in their own position if they are very much in love; and Captain Vavasour isn't rich, or he would have a house, you know, instead of living in country lodgings.”

“He may have some reason for keeping out of the way,” answered Mrs. Ambrose, who made very shrewd guesses at times.

“Yes, I know; he told me about it,” cried Delia, proud of the confidence reposed in her. “A horse of his ran for the Derby, and he had backed it heavily to win. Of course it didn't win—the favourite hardly ever does, he

says—and he lost £10,000. His brother, who is awfully rich, paid it for him on condition that he would give up horseracing for the future, and, in disgust, he says, he came down here."

"What made him choose Dibthorp, I wonder?"

Delia blushed divinely up to the very edge of her pretty brown hair.

"He was staying at Blenstone, at the big hotel in the market place, and saw me, mother. He asked the waiter who I was, and found out we had lodgings, and thought he would come on to Dibthorp. He only meant to stay for a week; but thought he should be bored to death, but somehow," blushing again, "he has stayed three—"

"And employed the time in stealing your foolish little heart away," put in Mrs. Ambrose, looking at the girl tenderly, but regretfully. "Do you understand, child, that nothing but sorrow could come of such an attachment?"

"Why, if he loves me?" said Delia, softly. "He is a man of the world, and though he might love you he would never marry you, dear. Supposing he did even make such a sacrifice, you would not feel at home amongst his people, and then he would get ashamed of his little country wife, and break your heart."

"Oh, mother! you don't know how good and nice he is!" exclaimed Delia, indignantly.

"I can understand that he seems all that to you, dear, and means, perhaps, now, to be honourable; but of course his brother would expect to be consulted if he has paid his debts, and he would never consent to such a marriage."

Delia lifted her pretty head with a sort of defiance.

"Mother, I love him so. It would kill me not to believe in him; but I do—I do—with all my heart!"

"Has he ever spoken to you of marriage?" "No; it was only yesterday he told me he loved me, although I guessed it before, of course."

"And that is all he ever will tell you, mark my words," responded Mrs. Ambrose, whom experience rendered prophetic. "A gentleman is ready to amuse himself with any girl, but when it comes to marriage he suddenly remembers his family, and heaps of other reasons why he shouldn't make her his wife. And so he quietly takes himself off—"

"Oh! mother!" interrupted Delia, with a shudder, "it is so cruel to talk like that."

"I am talking sense, dear," answered the elder woman, gently. "Isn't it a deal kinder to be candid with you than to let you go on hoping until you can't hope any longer?"

"What is it they say about living in hope and dying in despair?" said Delia, wistfully. "I hope that won't be my fate, mother."

"It needn't be, if you take warning in time. Never listen to any man, however honourable he may seem, who doesn't mention marriage in the same breath with love, because if he doesn't mean it at first you may be pretty sure he won't mean it later."

The tears began to gather fast in Delia's April eyes. Her mother's wisdom stabbed her like a sword. "She could trust her lover 'all in all,' but it was terrible to her to hear that her mother, who was so much wiser than herself, trusted him 'not at all.'"

"What is the use of telling me all this, now?" sobbed Delia. "I can't give up loving him now I have begun, can I?"

"Surely you could cast a man out of your heart the moment you felt sure he was unworthy of your regard?"

"No, I couldn't," answered Delia, positively.

Her mother looked at her keenly, and seeing she was sincere, a sort of fear took possession of her, and made her say, eagerly, impressively,—

"Delia, you must go away to London at once! How could I have been so blind and foolish to let matters go so far! I will speak to Captain Vavasour this very night, and give

him a week's notice to leave, and meanwhile you shall go to Marah, who is a girl of spirit, and will soon lecture you out of caring for a man who has no real regard for you."

"I love Marah very dearly, but even she couldn't do that, now," answered the girl, sadly; "I take after you, there, mother—if I once like them I like them for ever."

"I didn't mean in that sort of way, child; and you are very unlike me in one respect, for I don't forgive easily; and I really believe that if any one tried to murder you one moment you would forget all about it the next."

"If it was any one I loved."

"When a woman has wronged you, you ought to give up loving him."

"If you can."

"Nonsense! you always can, if you like," returned Mrs. Ambrose, who was a strong-minded woman, and had never been overtaken by a passion she could not master, like poor, tender, weak Delia. "There is only to make a strong effort. However, if I shall see Captain Vavasour presently, and if he doesn't mean honourable by you out he shall go."

"Mother," said Delia, desperately, "will you do me one great kindness? Will you wait until to-morrow to speak to Captain Vavasour, and not send me away until Wednesday? I promise you faithfully I will go then, without a word, if you still wish it."

"Very well, then, it is a bargain," replied Mrs. Ambrose, who was not without a secret hope that she had misjudged Captain Vavasour, and he meant well after all. "But I won't wait a moment after to-morrow night."

"I won't ask you to," responded Delia, and then the front door bell rang, and she hurried off, drying her eyes as she went.

## CHAPTER II.

"WHAT is the matter, Delia?" inquired Captain Vavasour, looking anxiously at her red eyes, as she slipped in shyly, with a letter on a tray, keeping her face as much averted as she could.

"Nothing," she sobbed out, and would have hurried away, only that he placed himself against the door and barred her exit.

"People don't cry for nothing," he said. "Has your mother been scolding you?"

"No; she has only been telling me her mind," answered Delia, naively.

"That is a distinction without a difference in most cases," he declared, cheerfully. "And I fancy it was in yours by your face. Won't you tell me all about it?"

"I can't, Captain Vavasour."

"That's nonsense, considering how confidential I have been to you. Besides, I must know, Delia, because if you are in any trouble, perhaps I may be able to help you out of it."

Delia hesitated a long while, and then she blurted out, impulsively,—

"Mother is going to send me away, because of you."

"Because of me?" flushing a little, "I thought I was such a very harmless individual."

"Mother thinks you are trifling," pursued Delia, who, now that the ice was broken, felt her courage revive a little.

"Then you have been telling her something, Delia?"

"No; somebody saw us together on Sunday afternoon and went and told mother."

"Let me see, what were we doing on Sunday afternoon, Delia?"

"We were walking in the wood together."

"Well, that was innocent enough."

"Yes, only you had your arm round my waist, you know," said Delia, blushing.

"Had I? I suppose I couldn't find a more comfortable resting place for my arm; but it was very wrong of me to take such a liberty, and I don't wonder that 'somebody' was shocked."

There was a comical twinkle in his eye that showed him amused, and also showed that he did not attach the same importance to the

little scene in the wood that she did. Poor Delia's heart began to sink. If a man in her own class of life had told her that he loved her he would also have meant that he wished to marry her as soon as he could, or she was willing, and it seemed as if her mother was right in saying that gentlemen thought differently about such things.

Seeing the pain in her face—the dumb reproach—Captain Vavasour put his arm round her again, and drawing her to him said soothingly,—

"Don't you know, Delia, that people always gossip. You are the prettiest girl hereabouts, and the other girls are all jealous of you, that's the longest and the shortest of it; but I wouldn't spoil my pretty eyes for them, for after all we did no harm."

"I oughtn't to have been there with you. I am afraid," hesitatingly.

"My dear Delia, if you are always going to be afraid what pleasure will you get out of your life?" inquired Captain Vavasour, with the specious philosophy of a man of the world. "I always take the good things the gods are pleased to send me without troubling about consequences, and that is the secret of happiness, I believe. You said I like each other, don't you?" stooping to kiss the sweet lips, "and a fig for the rest."

"That's all very well for you," it struck Delia to say, "but I couldn't live like that."

"Because you have yet to learn philosophy, my pretty little Delia."

"I don't want to learn philosophy. I want to be happy," she said, with an earnestness that touched him, for though he had only been amusing himself he cared for Delia, perhaps, more than he knew, although not enough certainly to tempt him into the supreme folly of marrying her. His one chance of retrieving his shattered fortunes was in bartering his old name for parvenue gold, and he could not afford to be disinterested. Delia was simply delicious, and if only she had been a "Lady Adeliza," or an "honourable Miss Something," he would have said how refined-looking she was; but she was only a farmer's daughter, poor child, and though he liked her more, perhaps, than he had ever liked any woman, he could not marry her.

Only in that case, he had no right to make love to her, of course. But then Captain Vavasour had never denied himself any pleasure, as he said himself, from the fear of consequences, and therefore it was hardly to be expected he would begin now. Then, to do him justice, he never suspected Delia of any strength of feeling, and fancied she would forget him as soon as he was gone.

"So you shall be happy," he said, smiling. "But what was it you brought me?" and he suddenly withdrew his arm, and walked to the table, where Delia had put down her tray. "A telegram!"

"The telegraph boy brought it."

But Captain Vavasour hardly heard her, he was tearing open the envelope in violent haste. Delia saw him flush darkly as he read; then he suddenly sat down, panting, on the nearest seat, and she flew to his side.

"You have bad news," she said, anxiously, "I am sure you have."

He pulled himself together, not to speak, before he answered her gravely,—

"My brother has been thrown from his horse and killed, Delia—and I am his heir."

"But he was kind to you and you are sorry, I see," said Delia, sympathetically. "It was so sudden and shocking."

"Very sudden and shocking," he repeated, but his thoughts seemed far away. "Will you go and tell your mother, Delia, that I must start at once."

"There's no train until two," she answered, with a strong effort at self-control. "That is to say, if you are going to London."

"I must go there first; but are you sure?"

"Quite; but I can get you a time-table if you like."

"No, no, never mind," he responded, with a certain impatience. "Two o'clock will do, and



then I can have a chop before I start, and pack my things comfortably. I shall get to Ramsgate to-night, in any case. I ought to have telegraphed back at once, but that will do when I get to the station."

Then suddenly he became conscious of Delia's pale looks, and added, with an accent of real tenderness, "My dear Delia, you mustn't be troubled. I shall be coming back to you again. You know I love you, and is not that enough?"

Delia listened greedily to these words, which seemed to print themselves on her heart, burning themselves in; and as she listened a smile broke over her face, and a rosy flush stained even her throat.

"If you promise me that I am satisfied," she said; and she departed without another word to give her orders to Mrs. Ambrose.

Her mother did not conceal her satisfaction when she heard that her lodger was going. It saved so much trouble and annoyance to have him leave of his own accord; and now there was no need to send Delia away. The girl would soon recover from her infatuation, and things return to their former condition; whilst she would have learnt this lesson—never to take in a handsome young lodger who belonged to a world so much above their own.

But then it is no use shutting the stable door after the steed has flown.

Captain Vavasour ate two chops, drank half a bottle of cherry, and by this time the dog-cart was at the door, and it was time for him to start.

Poor Delia, pale and sorrowful, came to bid him good-bye; and as he kissed her he took a locket off his chain and put it into her hand, saying softly,—

"Wear this always for my sake, Delia; and mind, you are not to grieve for me, for I shall soon be coming again."

And with this he kissed her once more lingeringly, and seizing hold of his valise went out into the hall. He shook hands with Mrs. Ambrose, thanking her for her attention, made the little maid happy with a "golden sovereign," and then jumped up into the dogcart and drove away. Just as he was turning the corner he looked back to see Delia standing in the porch, framed round by roses and clematis, and her beauty struck him with a sort of pang. But the next moment he had waived her a kiss, and then he tried to think of other things, although the wistful look in Delia's blue eyes haunted him for many an hour.

### CHAPTER III.

A month passed, and when no word or sign came from Captain Vavasour, Delia began to droop. She declared always she was quite well when her mother questioned her, but her soft wild-rose bloom was gone, and her eyes looked heavy—as if they had wept more than slept.

Mrs. Ambrose began to get alarmed at last, and sent her away to London, asking Mrs. Lane to take her to a good doctor there, and make him tell her if anything was wrong.

His verdict reassured Mrs. Ambrose. There was no disease of any kind, he declared, but the girl was a little weak, and he should recommend good country air, and to be outdoors all day. So Delia was sent for home, and Marah went with her, and tried hard to cheer her up.

She had heard from Delia herself the story of her trouble, and resolved to cure her, if it were possible. But she did not know what a hard task she had undertaken. Delia listened silently to all her arguments, and almost seemed to agree with her that a man who had behaved as Captain Vavasour had behaved was not worthy of any woman's love; but the next minute she would say passionately,—

"I don't care whether he is worthy or unworthy; I love him just the same, and if he doesn't come I shall die."

"Delia—darling, don't speak in that horrible way," pleaded Marah. "We can't spare you, mother and I."

"Not when you know I shall be so glad to go?"

"You can't want to leave us, Delia."

"I am only a poor little foolish thing, and you won't miss me long," she said, "and I am so dreadfully tired, Marah. Sometimes I feel as if I were fast dying of weariness, but I know all the while that if he were to come I should want to live directly."

There was no reasoning down such a terrible infatuation as this, and Marah said one day to Mrs. Ambrose, when they were alone,—

"Can we do nothing for Delia, mother? Supposing I were to write to Captain Vavasour?"

"I have thought of that, too," was the reply, "but one is loath to humiliate the poor child, and if he really cared for her he would have come back as soon as he had settled his affairs, and asked her to be his wife. I felt sure he was trifling with her from the very first."

"But you see, mother, we can't afford to think of our pride. Delia is dying."

"Delia is dying?" repeated her mother, with a horror that showed she had been blinding her eyes to the truth. "Why the doctor in London said there was nothing the matter with her but weakness."

"But that was four months ago, and she has been growing worse ever since. If nothing is done she won't be here at Christmas."

Mrs. Ambrose flung up her arms in despair. Delia had always been her favourite child, because she had been with her so much more than Marah; and, moreover, needed her more than her active capable sister, and at the thought of losing her she cried out in her despair,—

"It is that man who has killed her—curse him! Oh, Marah, can't we punish him? I would tear his cruel heart out of his body if I could. She was so innocently happy before she ever saw him, and now what is she, poor heart?"

"A mere wreck," returned Marah, with sombre fury. "Oh, mother, we will punish him somehow, unless he comes. But perhaps he never dreams that Delia cared for him so much, and would make atonement if he could. Let us give him a chance before we condemn him, and then if he fails us, we will betide him, that is all."

Marah's eyes gleamed, her crimson lips closed with a snap. She looked for the moment like some beautiful tigress ready to spring on her prey.

Mrs. Ambrose glanced at her admiringly, as she answered,—

"Aye, we will betide him! But do you know where to write, Marah?"

"Delia gave me the name of his club, and all gentlemen have their letters forwarded."

"Then write at once," exclaimed Mrs. Ambrose, with feverish impatience. "We can't let the child perish before our eyes."

"Of course we can't," replied Marah, only too glad to obtain her mother's consent. "I will write at once, and take the letter to the post myself, to make sure it goes—only Delia mustn't know."

But it almost seemed as if Delia guessed what they were about, or had overheard their conversation, for she began to ask eagerly when the post came in, if there were any letters, and would sigh painfully when they told her not.

For a week—a fortnight passed, and there came no reply, and when the letter came back to them through the dead letter office Mrs. Ambrose began to feel that Delia was doomed.

They had written to Mrs. Lane in the meantime to ask her to make inquiries about Captain Vavasour, but she had been unable to obtain any information; and now, the last hope gone, they had only to smooth poor Delia's road to the tomb.

Their one comfort was that she looked upon death as a happy release, and kept on repeating,—

"I am so glad to go; if you knew how glad you would never want to keep me a single hour."

One day, when the end was very near, she said to Marah,—

"I want you to bury me just close to the big holly bush in the churchyard, because he said once he hoped to lay there if he died at Diththorp, and Marah,—"

"Yes, my darling."

"You mustn't think I have been altogether foolish, for he did say that day he left, 'You mustn't be troubled. I shall be coming back to you again. You know I love you, and is not that enough?'"

"The more scoundrel he!" flashed Marah, indignantly.

"He meant to come back then, I have no doubt," Delia hastened to add, "but his friends persuaded him not, or he thought I didn't really care for him very much. As we don't know his motives, we oughtn't to judge him."

"I don't want to know his motives, I judge him by his actions," replied Marah, who would have done everything else for Delia but speak well of Captain Vavasour. "If he knew he couldn't marry you he had no right to try and make you love him."

"No, but I am glad he did, anyhow, for I had a whole fortnight of happiness, Marah, and that was better than nothing at all."

"But your fortnight's happiness cost you very dear."

"Not too dear. I was just like some foolish creature I read of once who fell in love with the sun, and wanted the sun to come and see her. Of course his kisses burnt her all up, but I daresay she died happy, like me, for there is some happiness which is much too beautiful to last."

"If you can forgive him, Delia, I cannot. He has made a demon of me—for, whereas I was an innocent girl a few months ago, now I feel sometimes as if I could murder the wretch who has killed my darling."

"Try not to feel like that," she pleaded. "I don't mind, Marah."

"Because you are an angel. If I had been wronged as you have, do you suppose I should have been satisfied to die unavenged?"

"I hope so, Marah—"

"And I hope not," answered her sister, almost fiercely.

A thin little hand stole into hers, and Delia looked at her beseechingly out of her hollow, dim eyes.

"If you were as near the Unseen Land as I am, Marah, you wouldn't mind all these things. And then, supposing he had married me, and been disappointed and ashamed when he had to introduce me to the world, shouldn't I have suffered far more than I suffer now? Indeed it is best as it is, dear. I don't fancy I should have lived to make old bones in any case, and I am just tired out, you see. You'll stay with mother, and be a comfort to her, so that she won't miss me after a bit, and it will be so quiet there under the holly bush—no more sorrow, no more suffering."

"My darling, what did you ever know of sorrow and suffering until he came?"

"No; but then I had never known any great happiness either," responded Delia, loyal to the last. "People must pay for their pleasures."

"But not such a heavy price as you have paid."

"One can't choose, as a rule; but I have had my wish, at any rate, for I always prayed I might die rather than have to live without him."

"And now, darling, you mustn't talk any more," Marah said, seeing how white she looked. "Won't you try to sleep a little?"

"Yes, I'll try," answered Delia, with the sweet submissiveness that made her dearer than ever to her mother and Marah; and she closed her eyes and kept quite still.

But in an hour's time she opened them again, and said gently,—

"Mayn't I talk again now, Marah? You see I can't sleep, and I seem to have so much to say. Look here"—and she opened her night-dress to show Marah a gold locket suspended round her neck by a narrow cord, just

long enough to reach to her heart. "I want this buried with me."

Marah began to sob, she could not help herself.

Delia's wasted hand sought hers caressingly, but she showed no sign of emotion herself, unless it might be by the nervous pressure of her thin fingers.

"You promise, Marah?"

"Yes, dear, I promise."

"He gave it to me—the day he left."

"Yes, I know—"

Delia's hand was over her mouth now.

"You were going to add—'Curse him!' Marah, I saw it in your eyes—but you know how it pains me to have you blame him, and perhaps, after all, it was only I who was wrong. Not knowing gentleman's ways I might have taken things that a lady in his own class would have laughed over too seriously."

"When a man tells a woman he loves her it means the same thing in every class, unless he happens to be a scoundrel—and I fancy, for all their boasting about their good blood, there are more gentlemen scoundrels than common scoundrels after all. I don't know a single farmer who would have treated you as Captain Vavasour has done—tried to win your love, and then left you to die."

"Perhaps he didn't try, Marah."

"You are always making excuses for him out of the goodness of your heart, dear; but I expect he will be judged up in Heaven if he is left off on earth—and he shouldn't wait so long for his punishment if my power only equalled my will."

"Oh! Marah," she murmured reproachfully.

"I should think it if I didn't say it dear, but I ought not to pain you, I know. Forgive me Delia," and she kissed her tenderly. "You know I must always speak my mind."

There was a long pause, and then Delia said,—

"Where is mother?"

"She is getting ready for church, dear. I thought you could spare her."

"Quite well—poor mother!"

And Delia sighed.

"How sweet the bells sound," she added, presently.

"I wonder if they have bells in Heaven, Marah."

"They have beautiful music, we know."

"Yes, and I fancy I can hear it sometimes when I am lying here half asleep, as if the angels were singing to me."

She looked out of the window, dreamily, to the blue arch of sky overhead, and then she added,—

"I am glad I am not dying in the summer when the flowers are out, and everything is so beautiful, although I know it will be far lovelier up there, of course. Still I did love the flowers so, and that day in the wood when he told me he loved me he gathered a great bunch of wild roses to put in my hair and dress. He always said I reminded him of a wild rose, because of my soft, pink colour. And I am so white, Marah."

"All through him."

Delia did not notice this speech. Her eyes were still fixed on the sky, whilst her thoughts were far away.

Lying thus the heavy eyes presently closed, and Delia slept—Marah still holding her hand, and scarcely breathing, lest she should break her slumber.

When she roused presently her mind wandered a little, and Marah sent off in all haste for the village doctor.

"I can do nothing," he said, when he saw her. "The end is very near."

"What do you mean by near?" asked Marah, forcing herself to speak calmly, though her heart was ready to break.

"I don't think she will see another day."

"Impossible!" cried Marah, despairingly.

"Can nothing be done, Dr. Dale?"

He shook his head decidedly.

"Your sister's case has been hopeless from the first, simply because she would not try to live. At starting there was nothing radically

wrong, and it seemed as if tonics could have cured her in no time, but nothing I could give her had the smallest effect for the reason I have just told you. A patient must help us or we can do very little."

"Then she has just been murdered?" cried Marah, fiercely.

Dr. Dale turned and stared at her.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Not by you. I didn't mean that. I know you have done all you could, Dr. Dale, but the person who robbed her of all desire to live was her murderer."

Dr. Dale had heard in the village how Captain Vavasour had courted Delia Ambrose, and his sudden departure had caused a good deal of gossip, which had also reached his ears. Therefore he thought he understood Marah's passionate accusation, and answered soothingly,—

"Yes, but I don't think your sister had a very strong constitution, Miss Ambrose."

"I know, but you said you could have cured her if she had wanted to live."

"So I could then, but there might have been something else later. Of course, if she had had much stamina mental trouble couldn't have killed her."

"I don't understand what you mean," exclaimed Marah, suddenly remembering that she must defend the poor girl's secret. "Delia was one of the most fortunate girls I knew!"

"No doubt," he answered gravely. "I wish I could help you, Miss Ambrose, but as I can't, and Pratt's wife is very ill, and wants me, I will go to her if you will let me."

"Tell me first of all if there is anything we can do to make her death easier, Dr. Dale?"

"You need not be anxious about that; she is dying of weakness, and will go off like one falling asleep. Only keep with her, for the end may come at any moment now."

"Thank you," Marah said. "I always prefer to know the truth."

And she conducted Dr. Dale to the door, and then went back to Delia. Half-an-hour later Mrs. Ambrose returned from church, and had scarcely need to be told what had gone on in her absence, for there was a grey shadow on Delia's face which comes only once, and she had hardly strength to smile.

However, she rallied a little towards evening, and lay watching the fire wistfully as it flared and danced in the wide, old-fashioned grate. Once she said,—

"The earth is a pleasant place for those who are happy, mother—ain't it? I used to think once upon a time it was nice to be alive, but now I would rather get away, and be at peace."

They did not contradict her—she was too far gone—and since nothing could save her it was well she should be satisfied with her lot. Only it seemed a pity she should be so necessary to their happiness if she herself were longing for release like a captive bird.

When midnight struck the two watchers noted that her face had grown more shadowy still, but she lingered on until early morning, and then, when the day was at its darkest and coldest, she awoke out of a sort of a dose, and said, faintly,—

"Are you there, mother—Marah?"

They both bent forward that she might see them better.

"Good-bye, dears," she said; "don't grieve—I am so glad to go."

There came a long pause, and they thought she was already gone, when she opened her eyes again full upon Marah, and said,—

"You will forgive him, dear—I am sure he didn't understand."

Even at such a moment Marah could not lie, and promise what was required of her.

Fortunately Delia could not wait, and having just lifted herself to smile at them both she fell back upon her pillow dead.

Mrs. Ambrose, who hardly realised her loss as yet, closed the sweet eyes with a reverent hand, whilst Marah stood up, and said, with sombre passion,—

"We know whose work this is, mother, don't we? And, so help me Heaven, if the

opportunity ever comes, I will punish that man until I make him taste some of the bitterness he has brought upon us. That poor creature would have been alive now, and her own happy self, if she had never seen Captain Vavasour."

"Ah! if—there are so many 'ifs' in life, Marah. We've got to bear our sorrow, my dear, and there's no use in blaming others for what can't be helped."

"It could have been helped."

"In the beginning—but that is past and done with now, and the thing that becomes us is resignation."

"And revenge," muttered Marah, between her white teeth.

Mrs. Ambrose did not hear—she was smoothing Delia's shapely young limbs for burial—and her tears were falling fast upon the unconscious face, which looked pinched and drawn just now, but would soon soften into white loveliness and angelic grace. Marah was too overcome to aid her, but when it was quite light she went into the garden, and gathered some snowdrops and winter roses, and made a diadem of them for the young head. She, indeed, was growing chill by this time, for it laid against her heart, and the lips were beginning to smile again, and it was possible to realise Delia as an angel in Heaven. By the next Sunday Delia lay in her quiet grave under the holly tree, and Mrs. Ambrose and Marah were preparing for departure. The former had let her farm, feeling as if she could not remain at Dithorp alone, and Mrs. Lane's failing health made it impossible that Marah should leave her altogether. Therefore it seemed a good place for Mrs. Ambrose, who had a sufficient income to join Mr. Lane in housekeeping, and as soon as everything was settled Marah carried her mother away with her.

Be sure their last visit in Dithorp was to the churchyard where poor Delia, "after life's fitful fever, slept well."

A month after their departure a gentleman drove into Dithorp, and put up at the village inn, where he was promptly recognized as Mrs. Ambrose's summer lodger. He looked remarkably well and cheerful, and after ordering luncheon to be ready for him in an hour, strolled off towards the Court Lodge with an expression of pleased anticipation on his face.

He had kept away six months to cure Delia of any foolish fancy she might have had, and now he had come to redeem his promise, bringing with him such gifts as please a woman's eye—silk dresses and jewellery—with which he was to buy forgiveness if he had done any wrong.

But he could not believe he had, for surely he had said no more to her than he had said to heaps of women who had but laughed in his face. It was true he had kissed Delia, but then this was a liberty you might venture to take with a farmer's daughter without its meaning anything, and really the child was so pretty she tempted you beyond your strength.

These thoughts were in the young man's mind as he strolled in a leisurely way towards the farmhouse, noting with a smile the banks of the river where he had passed many summer afternoons, and the old wood where he had once strolled with pretty Delia.

"She was a sweet little thing," he said to himself, musingly, "and it is just possible I might have regretted it much if I had married her, although the idea never entered into my head; but, as a rule, such marriages are a terrible folly, for it stands to reason the girl can't know how to behave in a world of which she has no experience. They talk about fine instincts, and Delia was, no doubt, very refined for her class, but the cloven foot would have peeped out, of course, if one had been very intimate with her. I daresay she is engaged to some sturdy young farmer by this time, and will make him a most excellent wife."

He finished his reverie in the porch of the Court Lodge, where Delia had stood to wave him a last farewell, and thought of this as he reached for the bell, and rang it lustily. A



maid-servant appeared—but not the little maid to whom he had given a sovereign at parting, and in answer to his question said that Mrs. Ambrose was gone.

"Gone!" repeated the young man in a tone of surprise. "Where?"

"To London town, sir, I believe, but mistress could give you the address, I am sure, if you wanted it."

"No, thank you—I should have liked to see her and Miss Delia Ambrose if they had been here, but as they have left it is of no consequence. I suppose they will be coming back again one of these days?"

"I don't think so, sir. Master has taken the farm. Mrs. Ambrose can't bear herself at Dithorp ever since Miss Delia's death—"

The other started as if he had been shot.

"Delia's death—you can't mean that Mrs. Ambrose's second daughter is dead!"

"Indeed, sir, she is, this two months or more. If you'd come through the churchyard you'd have seen her grave just under the holly-tree."

He reeled for a minute like a drunken man, and it was in quite a broken voice he managed at last to say,—

"What did she die of, do you know?"

"Of nothing particular, sir—only weakness."

The doctor said she wouldn't try to live—"

"Had she had any trouble then?"

"I've heard say she was in love with a gentleman who lodged with Mr. Ambrose once, and he deceived her," answered the girl, unconscious of the pain she was giving.

"At any rate, she was never herself after he went away—and kept fading very gradual until she died."

The young man slipped half-a-crown into her hand, and then hurried away to the churchyard, and stood by Delia's grave, with hot tears gathering in his dark eyes.

"It can't be true that she died through me," he kept saying to himself, and yet his heart was very heavy, as he recalled many words she had spoken, all showing the warmth and tenderness of her feelings. "Only how could I have supposed she would remember me after I was gone? Women never do."

He felt it hard he should have happened on one who was different to the rest, but he was deeply touched, too, by poor Delia's fidelity.

He even knew why she had asked to lie under the holly tree, and he felt like a monster as he went slowly back to the inn, paid for the luncheon he could not eat, and then returned to town, a wiser and sadder man for his visit to Dithorp.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"What a lovely woman! do you know who she is?" inquired Lord Ramsden, turning to a young man at his side, who was a fashionable dandy, and always boasted that he knew every debutante as soon as she came out.

They were idling an hour away in Rotten Row, watching the *equestriennes* as they cantered past, and commenting freely on their looks and riding when the lady in question—a splendid brunette—drew up close beside them, and looked at them both with calmly critical eyes.

"Don't know. I'm sure—never saw her before," returned the Honourable Percy; "a doctored handsome woman though!"

"And looks as though she'd been a her horse," pursued Lord Ramsden. "I must find out where she 'hails from,' or I shan't sleep to-night."

"I daresay she's an American," said the Honourable Percy, feeling that this was an easy way of accounting for the mysterious stranger. "There's shiploads of them always coming over."

"And why not?" inquired Lord Ramsden, laughing, for he spoke in quite an aggrieved tone.

"If you had four unmarried sisters you wouldn't ask that question. The Americans carry off such a lot of prizes in the matrimonial market they leave nothing much for our girls."

"Pshaw! my dear fellow, our girls get married, too. Don't be so desponding."

"It's enough to make one," drawled Percy, "for I'm always on duty, and I'm coming to the age now when a man likes a quiet dinner at his club, and a rubber afterwards a doctored deal better than balls."

"Come, you are only eight-and-twenty."

"In actual years; but you see I have lived so fast I am forty in feeling."

"Nonsense!"

"Pon my word, but how that girl's aces at you, Ramsden. She can't have fallen in love with you at first sight; for I suppose the dear creatures fall in love sometimes as well as us."

"I don't know. But I can't say that the expression of her eyes suggested such an agreeable thought as that. If I had ever seen her before I should say she had some spite against me."

"Perhaps she thinks we were staring at her rudely."

"Were we, then?"

"No; a cat may look at a king—and she must be accustomed to any amount of admiration."

The handsome *equestrienne*, who seemed to have paused merely to look at Lord Ramsden as it appeared, gave her horse its head now and galloped off, with a flush on her face that added to her beauty, and made everyone turn to wonder whom she could be. Lord Ramsden watched her until she was out of sight, and then somehow he sighed a little as he added,—

"Do try and find out something about her, Percy; one ought to know, I am sure."

"Very well," the Honourable Percy replied; and then he nodded to Lord Ramsden and went off to speak to a lady in one of the chairs, and the young earl was alone. He lingered for half-an-hour hoping the fair rider would return, and he should have another glimpse of her face, but at the end of this time he began to understand that she had left the Row, and sauntered off in search of his carriage.

That evening, as he was dining quietly alone, a whist-party on the *tapis* for later, the Honourable Percy broke in upon him like a whirlwind.

"Eureka—Eureka!" he cried, and dropped into a chair, panting. "I have just found out all about your fair friend."

"Have you dined, Percy?"

"No, I haven't had time yet."

"Well, then, draw your chair up to the table; they shall bring back the soup, and whilst you are eating you shall tell me all about my fair friend, as you are pleased to call her."

The Honourable Percy devoted himself to his dinner for a few minutes, drank two glasses of sherry, and then, much refreshed and cheered, he began his story,—

"Well, you know, after I left you this morning I inquired right and left of people if they knew who she was, and those who had noticed her at all seemed sure she was a stranger. But half-an-hour ago I happened on old Colonel Bagthorpe, and directly I began to describe her he said at once, 'I know quite well who you mean, she's a Miss St. Maur, and tremendously rich. They say she has a million, but that won't quite go down. However, there's no doubt she has £300,000 at the least, and that's enough for any reasonable woman.'"

"Only she oughtn't to be handsome too," I said, 'it isn't fair, for I was thinking of the poor girls, you see. I suppose she oughtn't' he said, 'but I daresay she doesn't object to the combination. You know who has taken her up, I suppose?' 'Hav'n't the least idea.' 'The old Duchess of Warminster. She is to present her next Tuesday, and will catch her for the Marquis if she can, of course; but you can see the girl isn't a fool by her face, and I don't expect she will allow herself to be caught for an idiot like poor Ashford.' 'There,' concluded the Honourable Percy; 'you know as much as the Colonel knows now, and if you want to make Miss St. Maur's acquaintance you will have to cultivate the duchess's. It would be a trying ordeal, for she is an old odious old woman, but I daresay

I should make up my mind even to that if I were a marrying man."

"What makes you think I am a marrying man?"

"Because it's your duty to be. You have a good old title, two unencumbered estates, and, of course, you must have an heir."

"I suppose I must one of these days," replied Lord Ramsden, philosophically. "But I like my present life too well to hurry."

"There I think you are wrong, because it's the sort of thing that ought to be done in good time if it is done at all. A fellow gets into set bachelor ways later, and then he isn't likely to be happy."

"Are you sure he ever is happy under any circumstances?" asked Lord Ramsden, cynically.

"One sees marriages sometimes that turn out well."

"Does one? I am glad to hear you say so, as such a fate is hanging over me. But I am afraid I have lost my illusions as far as women are concerned. I knew a pretty little girl, once a farmer's daughter, who was as pure and tender and sweet as the ideal wife one has dreamt of," continued Lord Ramsden, a shadow coming into his eyes, "but that was only one."

"I suppose she was one of the flowers that are born to blush unseen," answered the Honourable Percy, lightly. "But why didn't you marry her?"

"She wasn't in my own station of life. She was the daughter of a woman I lodged with when Firefly let me in for £10,000 worth of damages by losing the Derby, and my brother paid the debt for me on condition that I sold off my horses and kept quiet. She was singularly refined for her class, but it wouldn't have done—"

"And so you tore yourself away!"

"My poor brother died just then, you know, and I came into everything."

"Which made such a marriage still more inexpedient."

"Perhaps—but I don't know what made me talk about it, for it was a sorrowful story, and I am afraid I was not altogether blameless. I had been in the habit of flirting with every pretty woman I came across, and it never occurred to me she would take it more seriously than the rest. I forgot that she was so simple and innocent, poor child! A spade meant a spade to her."

He paused here, evidently moved; and the Honourable Percy, who was a good-hearted fellow, in spite of his affectations, pretended to be engrossed in a *paté*. But presently he said, without looking off his plate,— "What was the end of your little romance?"

"The poor girl died," answered Lord Ramsden, shortly.

"Is it possible to die of love?"

"Not for triflers like us, but I can understand that trouble might weaken a naturally delicate girl."

"Weaken, yes, but not kill."

"In this case she died, and I hope and pray you may be right—that I had nothing to do with it, but sometimes I feel so badly about it that, upon my word, if I could hear she had come to life again I would marry her straight off."

Of course this was a safe promise, as Delia slept soundly enough in Dithorp churchyard, but he was quite sincere; for the poor girl's sad fate had been a great weight on his mind, and often in the dead of the night he would rouse suddenly to hear these whispered words,— "You killed me. But for you I should have been alive now, and happy."

He could not tell what had made him think so much of Delia this day, but somehow she seemed to be present with him even when he was speculating about Miss St. Maur, who, as a fashionable beauty and a great heiress, could bear no sort of affinity with the simple village belle. But there is no accounting for such impressions; and though Lord Ramsden drank far more than his wont that night to

drown care, he could not even dim the vividness of the tender, beseeching face; nor forget for an instant that she was dead through him.

## CHAPTER V.

For more than a week Lord Ramsden tried vainly to obtain an introduction to Miss St. Maur. He even introduced himself to the Duchess of Warminster as a friend of her son, whom he certainly had met a few times, and sincerely despised; but though she was very civil she did not invite him to come and see her, or introduce him to Miss St. Maur.

At the drawing-room he caught a glimpse of the new beauty, whom royalty had been pleased to approve, thus establishing beyond controversy her right to the title, and she was present at the state concert afterwards, under the old duchess's wing, but he could not see that anyone spoke to her, and he heard the former tell the lady by whom she sat that she expected dear Ashford home in a few days, whereupon the other responded in a significant tone, "I suppose you do."

Lord Ramsden had given up going to balls since his brother's death, but he began to accept all the invitations he received now, in hopes of meeting Miss St. Maur. But it seemed as if she were not fond of these gaities, for though he saw her sometimes at the opera, and heard of her at quiet soirées, he never met her at a single ball.

He would have gone on like this for weeks, perhaps, she evading him like a will-o'-the-wisp, only that fortune favoured him in a wonderful way. She was riding one morning early in the Row before there were many people there, when a tall powerful chestnut horse which was being exercised by a groom suddenly took fright, and came down upon Miss St. Maur like a whirlwind.

Her own horse was unusually fresh, and naturally high-spirited, and when it heard the thud of the other's hoofs, and its panting breath, it became almost mad with excitement. Miss St. Maur patted and soothed it, and did her best to keep it under control, but Lord Ramsden knew how the contest must end unless he could get to the animal's head, and was hurrying to the rescue when the animal suddenly reared high up into the air, and Miss St. Maur slipped off and lay in an heap on the ground.

Fortunately she fell clear of the horse's hoofs, and he did not touch her as he scampered wildly off—but as she might have been hurt in another way he felt his heart sink as he sprang out of the saddle, giving the rein to his groom, and knelt down by her side.

He saw at once that she was alive, although she lay so still; and in about a minute the brief faintness passed off, and she opened her glorious dark eyes full upon him as she leant against his arm. To his surprise a strange expression of anger passed over her face, and she shuddered herself upright, as she said,—"Thank you, I am quite well now. Where is my horse?"

"It has followed the other, I fancy, but you need not be anxious; it will be caught, no doubt, before it does any harm."

"I hope so," she said, making an effort to rise, but she was shaken and alarmed, if not hurt, and had to accept his aid in spite of herself.

"I had better fetch you a cab," he observed. "If you would not mind getting over the fence you could sit down on the seat opposite whilst I go—and there would not be far for you to walk."

"Thank you—I will try," she answered, and began to walk, but stopped presently with a look of pain in her eyes, and paling cheeks. "I am afraid my foot is a little sprained or something; it hurts me when I move," she added, reluctantly; "I shall never be able to get so far as the fence."

There was a dilemma. As far as Lord Ramsden was concerned he wished nothing better than to prolong the interview, but he was too honourable to care to compromise her,

and such stories make a great sensation in society. By noon the next day it would be all over fashionable London that Miss St. Maur had fallen off her horse, and been assisted by Lord Ramsden, who had carried her home in his arms, &c., &c.

A story never loses in the telling, of course; and Miss St. Maur was so much the subject of curiosity and interest at the moment any details concerning her would have been greedily welcomed. He looked about him for some way out of the difficulty; and, as if in answer to his appeal, he perceived his groom coming towards them, leading Miss St. Maur's horse which, quite blown by its little escapade, hung its head, and looked thoroughly subdued.

Miss St. Maur caught sight of it at the same time, and heaved a sigh of relief.

"It will be all right now," she said, "if you can only find my servant. I can't think what has become of him. He must have followed somebody else."

"My groom shall go home with you," Lord Ramsden promised, wishing he had dared usurp this privilege himself. "But what about your foot?"

"It is not the stirrup-foot, and I am not very far from home."

But though she spoke cheerfully she had great difficulty in mounting her horse, and he had to almost lift her into the saddle. Then she thanked him, but without offering her hand, and rode slowly off towards the Duchess of Warminster's house in Park-lane, followed, although she was unconscious of the fact, by Lord Ramsden as well as his groom.

That very evening he received a little note from Miss St. Maur, thanking him for his "kindness," and begging he would not mention her little adventure.

"The duchess has been so shocked, I feel like a criminal," she added; "and yet I don't really see how I could help my horse behaving so badly. I told her some gentleman came to my assistance, but I did not mention your name, so pray don't enlighten her."

Of course her wishes were law, and Lord Ramsden kept his own counsel, but he was rather amused when Percy Lascelles cried out to him when they met at the club,—

"Did you hear what happened to the St. Maur yesterday? She was thrown from her horse, and some low fellow picked her up, and saw her home."

"Are you sure it was some low fellow?" inquired Lord Ramsden, smiling.

"So they say. But Miss St. Maur didn't know his name. The old duchess is furious."

"Why?"

"Because Ashford ought to have been there, she says."

"Has he come home, then?"

"I saw him this morning, and he told me he arrived late last night."

"Ah! too late to be of any use. But did you hear if Miss St. Maur was better. I understand she sprained her ankle when she fell."

"Ashford said she had hurt herself a little, and kept to her room."

"Then he hasn't seen her yet?"

"I believe not."

"Isn't he rather curious?"

"No; he said he hated beauties—they always snubbed a fellow so."

"It is a good thing he is prepared for his fate; for I shall be very much surprised if Miss St. Maur tolerates him."

"You forget that he is heir to a dukedom."

"Indeed I do not; but she doesn't strike me as the sort of girl to sell herself for a title."

"You can never tell. Disinterestedness is not the virtue of the age."

"No; but hang it all, Percy, there are some women left worth believing in."

"I suppose there are, and Miss St. Maur may be one of them; but I don't know enough of her to be able to judge. Still I should think she could afford to be better than most."

"I don't see what she would gain by being

Marchioness of Ashford if she were saddled with a fool of a husband."

"That is from your point of view. But, you see, although women always accuse us of running after money, we are not a bit more mercenary than they are; for they would sell their souls for jewels and fine clothes."

"But Miss St. Maur can have as many of them as she likes, and yet you see she dresses more simply than any woman in London."

"She is always in black."

"Yes, and that gives her a certain distinction amongst all the dressed-up people one sees. But look here, Percy, will you come with me one day? I am going to storm the dual citadel."

"I'm game," answered the other, gaily. "But let us wait until Miss St. Maur is well again."

"Of course. You didn't suppose I wanted to see the duchess, did you?"

"You'd be the only man who ever did, if so."

"I suppose the duke did, once upon a time?"

"Not he. It's a well-known fact that the duke proposed when he wasn't sober; and they kept him to it when he was, poor man; I thought you had heard that story."

"I dare say I have; but the duchess never interested me until she became Miss St. Maur's guardian."

"And now you are prepared to love her dearly if she will only invite you to Darsham House."

However, the duchess knew what she was about, and for a time nothing but old fogies or married men, partook of her gracious hospitality. People laughed and wondered if Miss St. Maur would allow herself to be caught, and some prophesied that she would, but the young lady herself was inscrutable, and gave no sign of her intentions.

The Marquis of Ashford rode with her every day in the park, and seemed to be in constant attendance; but though it was evident he was very much in love, she did not appear to give him any encouragement, unless by accepting his escort, which, perhaps, she could not refuse.

Meanwhile Lord Ramsden and the Honourable Percy went to storm the dual citadel, as they had declared they would. The duchess was out; but when they asked for Miss St. Maur the butler said, rather hesitatingly, that she was at home, but did not usually receive visitors in her Grace's absence.

"She will receive us, anyhow," said the Honourable Percy, with calm impertinence; and he made a sign to Lord Ramsden, who immediately slipped a sovereign into the man's hand.

"Oh! of course; if you have an appointment, my lord, it is quite different," the butler added, in the next breath. "Her Grace won't be home for another hour."

After this little hint he led the way upstairs to a charming boudoir, hung with blue satin and bright with flowers, where Miss St. Maur sat reading. She was so absorbed in her book she did not hear their footsteps, and when the butler announced them she looked up with a vivid blush, and said, gravely,—

"The servant forgot to tell you that the duchess was out. I am afraid she won't be in for some time."

"So we understood, but took the liberty of coming up all the same to inquire if you had recovered from your accident."

The colour deepened still more on her face, and she looked scrutinizingly at Lord Ramsden. But she regained her composure when the Honourable Percy added, with all his native influence,—

"Ramsden and I have done nothing since but envy the fortunate individual who went to your assistance. You don't know his name, I suppose?"

She turned to him with an amused laugh. "As I don't know what form your envy might take I think it would be better not to tell you."



"But it I promise not to quite kill him." There was a malicious gleam in the girl's handsome eyes.

"Perhaps I shouldn't mind."

"Then deliver him up to my vengeance," cried the young man, striking an attitude. "Where is he to be found?"

"Don't I look as if I were capable of avenging my own wrongs?" she asked. "In this case, of course, there is nothing to avenge, for the gentleman did me a great service—but if it had been otherwise—"

"You would have known what to do?"

"I fancy so."

"Do you know you begin to frighten me, Miss St. Maur. I am afraid you are strong-minded."

"And I am afraid I am not."

"You are pleased to be enigmatical."

"I don't see how. I am conscious of feeling weak sometimes when I want to be strong, and"—passionately—"I hate to believe that of myself."

"Why do you so particularly want to be strong-minded? You will never have to protect yourself."

"Am I not alone now?"

"Nay, you are under the voluminous wing of her Grace the Duchess of Warminster—and her dear boy—who, if his mother may be believed, is a perfect Bayard."

Miss St. Maur laughed merrily.

"Fancy poor Lord Ashford & Bayard! I believe he would be afraid of his own shadow. But we are talking scandal, are we not?"

And she turned the subject by asking Lord Ramsden's opinion of her ferns. She was a delightful companion, and the time passed so quickly in her company. Lord Ramsden was surprised presently to find they had been there an hour, and began to apologise humbly.

"Oh! never mind," she answered, with a smile. "Her grace will take care it never occurs again."

"Do you mean she doesn't allow you to see visitors?" exclaimed Lord Ramsden, indignantly.

"Not gentlemen."

"I think I would insist upon being my own mistress if I were you. You might as well be in a nunnery if the masculine element is to be so rigidly excluded."

"Not at all; there is the duke."

"He is seventy years old, and as deaf as a post."

"But Lord Ashford is young."

"And a fool."

"Fortunately I am not so difficult to please as you are, for I like both of them."

"Especially Lord Ashford?" put in the Honourable Percy.

She stared at him haughtily for a moment, then her features relaxed and she burst out laughing again.

"I really think you are the most impertinent person I know," she said.

"So everyone tells me," answered the young man, tranquilly. "But then nobody minds; it is only my way."

"I don't see why you should be such a privileged person."

"Nor I; unless it be that what you usurp is always accorded to you. That is why I am coming again to see you shortly."

"I tell you you won't be admitted."

"Will you leave that to me?"

She shook her head decidedly.

"Indeed, Mr. Lascelles, you mustn't come again, the duchess wouldn't like it; and whilst I live under her roof I am bound to consult her wishes. I shall get a terrible lecture as it is."

"Then I should lecture her back again."

"You forget that she is old enough to be my mother."

"Why don't you say your grandmother, Miss t. Maur."

"Because that wouldn't be true. And now—ou really, really must go," she added, half persuasively, half imperiously. "If the

duchess were to come she would never believe I wasn't in the habit of receiving gentlemen."

"How long do you mean to keep in leading-strings?"

She was some little while before she answered, and then her reply came cool and curt. "Until it suits me to make a change."

"Which I hope will be soon," responded the Honourable Percy, in no way disconcerted by this rebuff. "Come along, Ramsden, we've got to go."

The earl rose reluctantly. There was a charm in Miss St. Maur's presence which he could not account for or define. He had seen more beautiful women, perhaps, but never one who appealed both to his intellect and heart as she did. And then it was so delightful to watch her; she had so much change of expression. One moment she looked as scornful as a queen, the next she shot a softened glance at him; but for some inexplicable reason she appeared to be prejudiced against him, he thought.

It was the first time he had seen a woman who pleased him in every respect, and it was a little hard that all of a sudden he should find it difficult to please her.

They met often after this, and there was always that mixture of disdain and softness in her which puzzled and piqued him so much, and made him feel sometimes as if he should like to kiss her feet, at others strangle her lest any other man should have what he was beginning to long for with all his strength.

And so things went on until the season was drawing to a close, and Lord Ramsden began to fear that the duchess would soon carry Miss St. Maur away to her castle up in the north, and he should be left mourning.

There was a large garden party coming off at one of the pleasantest houses of the "upper ten," and Lord Ramsden went—for the same reason that he went everywhere now—in hopes of meeting Miss St. Maur.

For an hour he watched for her arrival in vain, and then the gaily-dressed crowd, who had gathered under the trees, parted to make a way for the Duchess of Warminster, who advanced smiling with Miss St. Maur by her side.

The heiress was dressed in white, with a bunch of natural roses in her hat, and another at her bosom.

She carried a white lace sunshade in her hand, and an ivory fan, trimmed with snowy feathers.

Her eyes looked strangely intense and brilliant under her black brows, but her face was pale, and her lips of a bright feverish red.

As soon as he dared Lord Ramsden made his way up to her, and bending over her chair whispered eagerly,—

"You don't look yourself to-day. What is the matter?"

"Nothing," she answered, coldly, "except a slight headache. London is beginning to get so terribly oppressive."

"Doesn't the band make your head worse?"

"Perhaps it does. I ought to have stayed at home."

"Why, when I can find you a cool and quiet place, if you like. I was strolling about the grounds before you came, and found a shady little arbour near a waterfall, where you would not even hear the music."

Miss St. Maur rose with an odd look of determination and triumph both in her face, and taking his arm strolled away with him, all London looking on, and commenting on the fact.

The duchess rose in undignified haste, and caught her up just as she had reached the end of the lawn.

"My dear Adelaide, you mustn't go away like this—what will people say?"

Miss St. Maur turned to her, smiling,—

"You let me leave yesterday with Lord Ashford."

"Yes, but then he is quite different."

"Why?" she asked, with provoking coolness.

"Because he is my son, and people would know directly I had placed you under his care."

"They will think you have placed me under Lord Ramsden's care, and I must really get away from all the noise."

"Let us go home, then."

"I will just take a stroll in the shade first of all, and come back to you presently," replied Miss St. Maur, her lips taking an obstinate fold.

The Prince and Princess of Wales arrived at this minute, and the duchess had to depart; but seeing that her objections had no effect on Miss St. Maur, she addressed herself to Lord Ramsden as she turned away, begging him to bring his companion back soon, and to be sure and not allow her to sit down on the grass.

"The duchess treats me as if I were a baby," exclaimed Miss St. Maur as soon as her grace was out of hearing. "I begin to be rather tired of my bondage."

Lord Ramsden thrilled at this confession, but as he dared not speak just yet he controlled his feelings for the moment, and said, quietly,—

"What made you put yourself under the duchess's protection?"

"She is my nearest neighbour in Leamshire, and as soon as I took possession of my property there she came forward to welcome me. I thought her so kind and motherly then. I did not know she had a son for whom I was destined."

"You do not seem to be fascinated with the prospect."

"I have not the slightest intention of marrying Lord Ashford."

"I am thankful to hear you say that, for I have fancied sometimes—"

"That I wanted to be a duchess, I suppose, for you could not fancy I was in love with Lord Ashford."

"No, but you seemed kind to him."

"I daresay, for I don't really dislike the poor man. He isn't clever, of course, and bores one dreadfully; but he has a kind heart."

"So I have heard. But here we are at my arbour. What do you think of it, Miss St. Maur?"

"It looks rather dark."

"Because you are in the sunshine. When once your eyes get accustomed to the subdued light you will be able to see perfectly. Hm! the drip, drip, of the fountain a cool sound?" he added, in a softer tone, as he took his seat beside her on the rustic bench; "and how sweet the roses smell! This is far nicer than the lawn."

She leant back silently, and her face was even paler than it had been before, whilst her eyes seemed literally to glow in the gloom. Lord Ramsden, who had meant to be so eloquent and persuasive, felt the words freeze on his lips, but he dared to lift her gloved hand and kiss it; and as she did not chide him his courage returned, and he murmured, passionately,—

"Since the first time I saw you I loved you, Miss St. Maur, and the feeling has been strengthening day by day, until I know now that I cannot live without you."

"I wonder how many women you have said the very same thing to in the course of your life, Lord Ramsden?"

"I have talked nonsense to plenty; but you are the first I have ever asked to marry me."

"More shame to you, perhaps; because when men say everything but that, it is very cruel."

"I know it is; and I have not much on my conscience in that respect, for the girls I always flirted with were amusing themselves as well I—"

He broke off here suddenly, for the magnificent eyes were fixed on him so intently he felt almost compelled to add,—

"Once, perhaps, I was to blame. I have reproached myself often, at any rate. But I did not mean any harm, and when one is accustomed to trifle it is not always easy to understand that others may take it seriously."

"Or that what is fun to you is death to them," said Miss St. Maur, coldly.

Lord Ramsden started, and looked at her

keenly. It almost seemed from her manner as if she knew something of his miserable adventure at Diththorp. But this was absurd, of course. How should a fashionable heiress and beauty know about Della Ambrose? He recovered himself with effort, and said,—

"We all make mistakes sometimes, and I don't pretend to be better than the rest; but I can promise you that if you will marry me you shall have no reason to regret your choice. I love you with all my heart, and I am tired of a bachelor life. I have £40,000 a year, which is a certain guarantee that I am not seeking your fortune—which is, I assure you, a drawback in my eyes."

She laughed incredulously.

"If I were poor and of humble birth you would not think of me, Lord Ramsden."

"If you were ever so poor or ever so humble, and I loved you as I love you now, I should marry you in spite of everything. I never dreamt that it was possible to care for anyone as I care for you."

She seemed to be convinced at last, for she held out her other hand to him, saying gently,—

"I daresay I am very foolish, but I am quite inclined to try you."

Beside himself with happiness he would have caught her up to him and pressed her to his heart, but Miss St. Maur drew away from him with a certain hauteur.

"No, please don't," she said, confusedly.

"When we know each other better. And now will you take me back to the duchess, Lord Ramsden?"

"Surely we may have ten minutes more together?"

"Not unless we want her to come and fetch me away. She is one of those strong-minded people who won't stand any nonsense. There she is"—drawing a quick breath, and pointing out her grace's portly figure as she came sailing down the path, her voluminous skirts sweeping the gravel—"what shall we do?"

"Steal a march upon her," answered Lord Ramsden, laughing; and, drawing Miss St. Maur with him, he passed out of the opposite side of the arbour, and hurried her towards the lawn by another path, so that when the duchess returned in a great flutter ten minutes later Miss St. Maur was seated by Lord Ashford, looking very cool and innocent, and was quite distressed to see the duchess so anxious and overheated.

## CHAPTER VI.

LORD RAMSDEN was considered a very lucky man when his engagement to Miss St. Maur was made public. But although he was most passionately attached to his beautiful fiancée he was not altogether satisfied, for her manner was so strange sometimes she almost frightened him.

One minute she would yield to his caress, the next raise herself out of his arms, and accuse him bitterly of being a deceiver, and wanting her only for her money. But as the duchess had grown rather cold since she found that Miss St. Maur would never be her daughter-in-law, it was desirable that the marriage should take place at once; and the girl saw this herself, and did not oppose her lover's prayer.

But one day, about a fortnight before their wedding, she wrote to him that she had left the duchess's, circumstances being altogether changed, but if he would go and see her that evening she would explain everything.

The address she gave—in a cheap suburb—was a surprise to him, but as there was no accounting for a woman's caprices he decided not to be anxious. But he could not help staring when he was introduced by a slovenly little maid of about fourteen into a small, meanly-furnished room, such as the lowest dependent in the grand house from which Miss St. Maur had come would have turned up her nose at in high disdain.

"Miss will be down in a minute," she said, and shut him in and retired, taking with her

a plated spoon that was lying on the table, to save him from temptation, no doubt.

Presently Miss St. Maur appeared, dressed simply in black merino, but looking neat and refined, and more beautiful than ever in his eyes.

"I thought I would rather tell you myself than write it that I am absolutely ruined, and have taken these lodgings for a few weeks, whilst I look out for a governess's situation."

"What do you mean?" he asked, catching her hand, and holding it fast. "How could you take a situation for a fortnight, and our wedding-day is on Saturday week?"

"I can't marry you now, Lord Ramsden; and I am sure you can't wish it now."

"On the contrary, Adelaide, I wish it more than ever."

"But I am not only ruined, Lord Ramsden—I must tell you now, for it is sure to be found out—that I am not a lady by birth, and only got up in the world when I had all that money left me. It didn't matter how I was born all the while I was so rich; but it matters now, of course, and so I release you from your engagement, and hope you will be happy with somebody else."

"I am so sure of being happy with you I don't care to try doubtful experiments, thank you."

"But, Lord Ramsden, the whole world will blame you."

"What do I owe to the world that I should sacrifice my domestic happiness on its shrine? I love you, as I never dreamt I could love. I want you for my wife; and as you have promised yourself to me you can't draw back now."

She argued the matter for several minutes, but as she made no impression she concluded at last with,—

"I think you are very foolish. Your friends will all be very angry with you."

"I have no friends."

"Not the Honourable Percy Lascelles?"

"Well, yes; I like him better than anyone else. But I know what he will say about the matter. He wishes he were in my place."

Miss St. Maur blushed divinely, and declared him to be incorrigible, but she said no more. And it was finally settled that their marriage should take place from the house of a married cousin of his, whom Miss St. Maur knew and liked.

Meanwhile Lord Ramsden insisted that she should stay with Mrs. Venables, and not in her mean little lodgings, although she declared she had not been accustomed to anything grander in her youth, and could do quite well.

"Anyhow, I am sure you were accustomed to cleanliness, and this is not clean; besides, that dreadful maid—"

"Poor child! You don't understand what it is to be poor?"

"Indeed, I do; but poverty and dirt are not a necessary combination; and I don't believe that you are the least comfortable here, Adelaide."

"I didn't say I was. But beggars can't be choosers, you must remember."

"I won't have you speak of yourself in that way, darling. You are rich in love if not in money."

"I am afraid love doesn't count for much in this mercenary world."

"It counts for everything with me."

"Isn't this something new?"

"Since I knew you, and learnt what love was. There comes a time with all men—when they can only feel—and have ceased to reason."

"Have you ceased to reason then?"

"You would tell me so, I suppose."

"Perhaps I should, for you are doing a very foolish thing."

"As we are not likely to agree upon this subject it would be better not to discuss it," he answered, stooping to kiss her, "I am perfectly satisfied—and that is enough."

The next day Miss St. Maur left her humble lodgings in Lavender-terrace—paying for the month just the same, and giving presents besides to the slovenly maid, and the dirty little

children. The landlady expressed herself extremely sorry to part with her, as she was just the sort of lodger to give style to the house, she said, but, of course, it was natural she should prefer visiting, and so it was no use grumbling.

"Now I am happy again," Lord Ramsden said, as he saw her installed in his cousin's drawing-room—"You look in your proper place."

"That shows how deceitful appearances can be—for I am not."

"Hush!" he said, "you forget that I don't believe a word you say!"

The next few days Adelaide was so sweet and gracious to her lover; she rivetted his chains closer and closer, making him feel as if all his happiness were bound up in her, and he could not live without her. Mrs. Venables laughed at him unreservedly, and declared she had never expected to see him come to this; but he was too much to earnest to mind her bantering, and did not even take the trouble to retort.

On the eve of the wedding-day she was considerate enough to go out and leave them alone, and as Lord Ramsden took Adelaide into his arms he said passionately,—

"Oh! darling, I begin to be so glad you are not rich!"

"Why?" she said, smiling up at him tenderly.

"Because I shall like to give you everything."

A strange stern look replaced the smile on her red lips.

"Perhaps I may not quite care for the burden of such an obligation."

"My dear Adelaide, could there be any question of obligation between husband and wife? All that I have belongs to you, and surely I am more than repaid by the gift of your sweet self."

The smile was all gone now, and her eyes were as dark as midnight, and seemed to chill her lover through and through.

"It is not for me to depreciate myself," she said, "or you will think I am fishing for compliments, but perhaps you will repent your bargain later."

"Adelaide, if you talk in that way I shall do something desperate," he cried, in a hurt tone. "You are always trying to frighten me out of my happiness."

"Because I warn you of certain possibilities?"

"Which are no possibilities at all. Come, I won't allow you to depress me to-night of all nights, when I feel and know myself to be the most fortunate man under the stars."

She looked up at him again with that odd expression of mingled triumph and pity, but before she could prophecy any more evil her lips were sealed by his, and she was held so fast and hard she had to call out for mercy.

Adelaide looked very lovely in her bridal dress, and Lord Ramsden felt almost mad with joy and passion as she stood downcast and trembling by his side at the altar. Her only bridesmaids were Mrs. Venables' little girls—two tiny fairies of seven and eight, in blue satin and lace—with pink-eyed daisies in their hats, and beautiful necklaces of the bridegroom's gifts. But, charming as they were, who could look at them when the bride stood there "in gloss of satin and glimmer of pearl," with the rich flush on her face, forming an exquisite contrast to her snowy garments?

The words were spoken in all solemnity that made them man and wife, and then they returned to Mr. Venables' house, where a quiet little breakfast was prepared. The Honourable Percy, who was best man, came out very strong when he proposed the bride's health, and said he had such a high opinion of Lady Ramsden he should have liked to marry her himself, but should have to remain a bachelor now, he supposed, until Adela Venables had grown up, when she had faithfully promised to marry him.

The bride and bridegroom departed at about five for Dover, en route for Paris, Lady Rams-



den taking with her as maid a middle-aged quiet-looking person, who seemed, her husband thought, extremely shy; for she wore a thick veil over her face, and was in evident trepidation whenever he approached her.

However he soon forgot all about her in the happiness of being alone with his wife, and the journey seemed so short, he could hardly believe it when the train whistled its way into Dover Station and a porter came to the door.

At Lady Ramsden's wish they were not to cross that night, and Lord Ramsden had telegraphed the day before to secure rooms at the Lord Warden.

Thither, therefore, they at once repaired, and as it wanted nearly two hours before dinner-time, they strolled to the end of the pier, and sat down to watch the sea and the passing boats.

Adelaide was silent, even sad, but he was too happy to find any fault with her, and perhaps admired her sensitiveness on the whole. When they re-entered the hotel Lady Ramsden went straight to her room to dress for dinner, and he smoked a quiet cigar, thinking of her all the while, and longing, lover-like, to hear the silken rustle of her dress along the floor.

He had begged her not to make much toilette, and she had promised with one of her oddest smiles.

But when three-quarters of an hour passed, and she did not come, Lord Ramsden began to think she had not been able to resist the temptation of surprising him by one of Worth's masterpieces, and though he was flattered, he felt inclined to chide her too.

When another ten minutes passed bringing no sign of her he felt almost annoyed, and going to her room knocked at the door. No answer was returned, and he entered without further ceremony to find the room empty.

Her ladyship's boxes were still unpacked, her dressing-case stood on the table; the only thing he missed was a small travelling-bag, which he had heard her tell one of the waiters to carry straight to her room when they first arrived.

He glanced into the dressing-room, that also was empty; and then he went back to the sitting-room, and ringing the bell, said with the most natural air he could assume, as the waiter appeared,—

"Will you send her ladyship's maid to me."

"She is not in the hotel, my lord," answered the man, respectfully, "I saw her go out with her ladyship about half-an-hour ago."

Lord Ramsden could just command his voice sufficiently to say,—

"Oh! thank you, it is all right," but as soon as the sound of the others' footsteps had died away he searched the bedroom thoroughly for a letter which should explain this strange proceeding. He found nothing there, but in the dressing-room there was a note pinned on to the pin cushion, which he seized hold of eagerly, although his hand trembled so violently he could scarcely keep it steady enough to be able to decipher the lines. It ran thus,—

"When I tell you that I am Marah Ambrose, the sister of the unfortunate child whom you so cruelly deceived, and who died through you, you will understand why I married you, and why I leave you. Delia loved you, and you would not have her: you love me, and I will not have you. Is it not quite fair? People must reap as they have sown. When I saw my darling lying dead at the old house, and knew that she had perished because you had not come to redeem your promise, I swore a great oath to avenge her if it was ever in my power. And fortune favoured me wonderfully. My godmother, Mrs. Lane, came unexpectedly into a large estate in Leamshire by the sudden death of her only brother. She was in very delicate health at the time, and the shock weakened her so much that she gradually sank, and in rather less than a month was lying by his side. She had no near relations, and left me all her wealth amounting to over £12,000 a-year. 'Now,' I said to myself, 'I will have my revenge. I will make him love

me, and when he most hopes for happiness I will treat him as he treated Delia—forsake him, but with *éclat*, in the face of the world, whose scorn and derision he will become.' My mother, who pretended to be my maid, was with me all along, and has helped me to my vengeance, and flies with me to-day. You need have no fear that I shall drag your honour through the dust. I am far too proud to be a coquette, and, moreover, I cast off your name when I cast you off, and hope never to hear it again. I have not lost my money. I simply sold the estate because I did not intend to go there again; but I put you to this test, wishing to see if you would forsake me as you had forsaken Delia. So there is no need to be anxious about me. My mother and I will seek a home together in a distant land, comforted by this thought—that we avenged poor Delia, and pierced your heart with the same arrow that killed our gentle, innocent darling. You will find every jewel you gave me, and every letter you wrote me, in the dressing-case at the hotel. Adieu.

"MARAH ADELAIDE AMBROSE."

This looked very cruel to Lord Ramsden as he read it, and he stood for a moment absolutely stunned.

A cold perspiration broke out on his white face, and he staggered so weakly he was obliged to sit down for a few minutes to recover himself.

Then seeing that the table was set in the next room he got in there somehow, opened the bottle of champagne that stood ready on the sideboard, and poured himself out a whole tumblerful.

Gradually the colour came back to his white face, and the light to his eyes.

"I will have her back this very night, so help me Heaven!" he said, and set his teeth like one who means to have his way, "or die in the attempt."

## CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER tumblerful of the champagne, and the blood came tingling back to his very finger ends, and he felt suddenly strong again.

Seizing his hat he hurried from the hotel, telling the waiter, whom he met on the stairs, to throw away the dinner, and put supper on the table in two hours.

He went to the station close by first of all; but he did not expect to find Marah there, and therefore was not disappointed, as he strode off to the other, helped by the champagne, which gave lightness to his feet without over-weighting his head.

Here there was no second platform, so that his search was less complicated, but he soon saw that his wife and her mother were not there. But it was not likely, under the circumstances, they would show themselves until the last moment, and therefore he went to the waiting room. They were not in the one for first-class passengers, but when he looked into the other he caught sight of two dark figures, wearing plain ulsters and thick veils, sitting close together, in the darkest corner, talking in a low, anxious tone; and, walking up to them before they perceived his presence, he laid his hand on the shrinking shoulder of the younger woman, and said, gravely,—

"What you planned was cruel and un-womanly, and contrary, I know, to your real feelings. But I forgive this—even as I ask you to pardon the wrong I unwittingly did your sister—and I bid you come back and perform the vows you took upon yourself solemnly in the sight of Heaven this morning."

There was a silence, broken presently by a dry sob, and Marah threw back the veil from her white face, saying, brokenly,—

"I cannot live with Delia's murderer. You must know there could be no happiness for us together, Lord Ramsden."

"That I absolutely deny. But you must see we cannot discuss the question here, Adelaide"—for a party of young labourers and their sweethearts had just come in, and were looking

curiously at them—"come back to the hotel, and if later you desire to leave me, I swear to you, on my honour, you shall go. But Heaven forgives us all such terrible sins—and surely we ought to be merciful to each other."

She dropped her veil again to hide her tears, but when he offered her his arm she took it submissively, and allowed him to lead her out. Was it possible that Marah's woman's heart pleaded for him—had pleaded all along, and that her revenge was costing her very dear? Mrs. Ambrose would have walked behind them, but Lord Ramsden turned to her, and said, almost sternly,—

"Nay, it is time this farce should end, Mrs. Ambrose. You are my wife's mother, and I cannot suffer you to efface yourself in this way."

Marah put a trembling hand in her mother's, and drew her to her side, and in this way they walked back to the Lord Warden, and up to their own rooms.

Entering the drawing-room, Lord Ramsden bolted the door behind them, and placing Marah, who was shaking from head to foot, on a couch, fetched her a glass of wine from the adjoining apartment, and then, when a little gleam of colour had returned to her face, he stood in front of her and said,—

"Now, Adelaide, of what am I accused?"

"You killed Delia," she said, trying to speak sternly, although there was a new softness in her eyes which looked almost as if she desired to be proved in the wrong.

"I flirted with her as I had flirted with dozens of others, never having known what it was to be seriously attached to any woman until I knew you. I was wrong, no doubt, but I swear to you I never once guessed that Delia cared for me really, and fancied when I left her that day she would have forgotten all about me before a month had gone by. I liked her as we like a pretty child; and her innocence and sweetness, her kind sympathy, made her very attractive to a man who was suffering from fortune's disfavour and wanted a comforter. If I had supposed that Delia would become attached to me I should have left Dithorpe, but it never once occurred to me, as I said just now."

"Then how came you to promise Delia you would return?"

"I suppose I was a little touched at parting, and liked to persuade myself I should be coming back to her soon. For I found when the moment of parting came that I liked her more than I knew; and I must tell you, Adelaide, that your chief charm for me when I first saw you was that now and then there was an expression in your face that reminded me of Delia. I could not understand it then, but I never saw or spoke to you that I did not remember her."

"And yet I am not like Delia," and Marah spoke quite gently now.

"Not in feature or colouring, certainly, but often in expression. You glance up inquiringly under your eyelashes sometimes just as she did, and your smile is her smile, when it is a natural one."

"I don't wonder that you say a natural one. I have not smiled once from my heart since I saw my darling lie dead."

He had stood all this while, but he sat down beside her now, touched by her sad tone, and said tenderly,—

"If you could feel for her so much, Adelaide, you could also feel for me. She is dead in her innocent faith, and among the angels in Heaven, therefore a hundred times happier than she could ever have been on earth. I have probably a long life before me—and you would condemn me for years and years of misery and hopelessness for her sake, who was far too good and gentle to be pleased by such cruelty."

Marah knew that, for Delia had pleaded forgiveness with her last breath, and had again and again urged that she might have attached more importance to Lord Ramsden's words than they had deserved. But how could she bear to feel that the girl was un-

avenged when this had been the one great purpose of her life for months, when for this she had accepted her husband's name and love; that she might turn, serpent-like, and sting the bosom in which she lay? It was impossible. Delia's memory was more to her than this man. It ought to be, it must be. She was growing weak because—because—

Here she broke off with a sort of shame. She was going to add, "Because I love him."

Mrs. Ambrose had been perfectly silent all this while, leaving the husband and wife to settle the matter between themselves, but when Marah did not answer she put in quietly—

"If Delia were here I know what she would say, Marah."

"What?" eagerly.

"The same as she said in dying, 'You must forgive him, dear. I am sure he didn't understand!'"

Marah hid her face in her hands, and wept convulsively. She seemed to hear Delia's faint broken voice and see the dim pleading eyes.

"Yes, I know she would," said Lord Ramsden, following up the advantage, "she was so kind."

"The more shame to you, then, for killing her!" exclaimed Marah, flashing scorn at him through her tears.

"I did not kill her, Adelaide."

"You did not stab or shoot her; certainly; but she died through you."

"Suppose you had unconsciously gained the affections of some men (it may have happened more than once even), and not being naturally strong this trouble ruined his health, and he had died; would you have considered it fair if his relations had condemned you as his murderer?"

"Yes, if I had tried to attract him?"

"With the object of gratifying your own vanity, you mean; but I had no such thought, Heaven knows! Indeed, I never thought at all."

"But you ought to have thought," passionately.

"Are any of us perfect, Adelaide?"

"I know I am not—nor you neither, Marah, if you are nourishing such bitter thoughts," put in Mrs. Ambrose decidedly.

She had been quite ready to aid (and abet her daughter in the first days when she believed Lord Ramsden to be a monster of cruelty, and Delia's destroyer; but since she had known him better, and saw how disinterested his attachment to Marah was, and how kind and courteous he was to everyone about him, her feelings altered, and she would fain have had Marah forgive him, and accept the happiness within her reach.

Marah looked up at her reproachfully, and yet it almost pleased her, too, that her mother should go over to the enemy for whom her heart was pleading in every aching chord.

"Yes, that's the truth, child!" pursued Mrs. Ambrose. "I was as bitter as you are once upon a time, for I believed that Lord Ramsden forsook Delia because she was poor and of humble birth; but since he was ready to marry you when you appeared to be no better off, it shows me misjudged him, and ought to have been a little more merciful in our judgment, as he says. I am sure now he would have married our poor Delia if he had loved her enough—as he loves you—and as there's no calling her back to life we must try to be happy without her. You have married Lord Ramsden, and ought to do your duty to him."

"I married him on purpose to punish him, mother. You know that quite well."

"Yes, and did the very thing you accused him of doing, just to show him how wicked he had been," returned Mrs. Ambrose in her shrewd, practical way. "Come, Marah—I am going away presently—let me feel that I am leaving you happy—in the right way."

She took Marah's hand and placed it in her husband's; but although Lord Ramsden's strong fingers quivered with eagerness they did not close over their tremulous little captive. He would have nothing that she did

not give him voluntarily after all that had passed, and she sat like a stone, with a cold look in her beautiful eyes, and her lips drawn into a close crimson thread.

After having pursued this man so relentlessly should she suddenly give in like a weak fool? Her heart said, "Yes," the spirit of revenge said, "No." And perhaps Marah would have listened to the latter, and wrecked all the happiness of her future life, only that Mrs. Ambrose, who had seen Marah kissing something of Lord Ramsden's a little while before, and knew by this that she loved him, knelt down beside her, and said, imploringly—

"Marah, I beseech you to listen to your better feelings, and to poor Delia's last request, for my sake as well as your own. I have lost one daughter by death. Let me feel, at any rate, that the other is happy in a good man's keeping. And you may say what you like. Lord Ramsden is a good man, and he ought not to be punished so severely for one fault. If I say this it must be true, for I loved Delia even better than you did, and would help you to punish anyone who had done her real wrong."

Marah's beautiful head drooped, and the tears came again; but her attitude was less discouraging, for Lord Ramsden ventured to press the hand he held, whilst he bent forward to murmur in her ear—

"Punish me if you like, but stay with me, too, for I cannot live without you, dear."

Marah tried to straighten herself, but somehow she lost her balance, and fell prone into his arms; and then Mrs. Ambrose quickly departed, and left them alone together.

Marah's vengeance ended as many a woman's vengeance has ended before; and there is no doubt that she congratulated herself often in the years to come that she had listened to mercy, but when Lord Ramsden, who is sure enough of her to be able to joke even about such a time, will say, laughingly, "Ah! my love, if you had gone away that night you would soon have come back again," Marah shakes her head with great decision.

"Indeed, you are quite wrong," she says. "Your finding us as you did was quite an accident, for mother had looked out the train without her spectacles, and made a mistake in the time; so that instead of getting off at once, as we had hoped—"

"Hoped, Adelaide!" reproachfully.

"I mean expected. We had to wait just half-an-hour. We went into the third-class waiting room, thinking you would never look for us there; and indeed, I didn't fancy you would look for us at all, after you had read my letter."

"I would have died rather than acquiesce in the miserable fate you had prepared for me. Besides, I loved you, darling—"

"I see you put all your love into the past tense," she said, smiling.

"Because there is no need to speak of the present, for I am sure you know—"

"That what at first was passion's voice Has since been turned to reason's vow."

Marah finished the quotation—

"And though I then might love the more, Trust me I love the better now."

"That's Moore, not me," said Lord Ramsden, kissing her. "I love you more and better, too, since the day you showed yourself such a true woman, and gave up revenge for love."

[THE END.]

A BAD SPELL.—The fashionable young ladies at a party, a few nights ago, organized a spell-binding. The bells that wore the most expensive jewelry was the worst speller, and twelve out of fourteen went down on the word "separate." "Phthisis" felled them all, and one of the cooks was called in to spell the word for them. A young lady who fondled a pug dog and wore diamond earrings maintained that d-o-w-t was the way "doubt" was spelled when she went to school.

## FACETIE.

"Why," exclaimed a tourist, "a donkey couldn't climb that hill;" and then he added, "and I'm not going to try it."

With ladies of taste you cannot hope to accomplish much unless you are yourself accomplished.

DIALOGUE near the sea:—"I do not see how you ladies can remain here two months looking upon the changeless ocean." "But the men change," was the reply of a lady.

LITTLE UNA McM., who had been sitting with knitted brows for several minutes, as if pondering some weighty problem of life, suddenly exclaimed, "Aunt C., I've been trying to think what business to go into when I'm grown up, and I've just decided. I mean to be a hypocrite."

A CORRESPONDENT asks, "What time of year do the days begin to shorten?" When you have a bill coming due. A bill coming due is the great annihilator of time. The days are crowded together in thin layers, and the nights are like a smear from a blacking-brush.

"No," remarked the red-nosed man, "I don't believe in this bathing; people bathe too much, altogether too much. Look at me. I keep out of the water!" They did look at him, and immediately came to the unanimous conclusion that he not only kept himself out of the water, but that he also kept water out of himself.

ANOTHER EGYPTIAN COMPLICATION.—Passenger—I see that the Khed-dive, as they call him—Second Passenger—Ker-deeve, I believe it is pronounced. Third Passenger—I'm told the natives call him the Ked-ivor. Newsboy (settles it)—Fift' edishun proclamashum by the Khed-diff!

A COUNTRYMAN with his bride stopped at a hotel the other day. At dinner, when the waiter presented the bill of fare, the young man inquired: "What's this?" "Bill of fare, sir," replied the waiter. The countryman took it in his hands, looked inquiringly at his wife and then at the waiter, and finally dived his hand into his pocket and inquired, "How much is it?"

A WOMAN in France slept seventy-three days in one innings, and when she awoke and learned that her husband had been taking his meals at a restaurant during all this time, instead of getting out of bed at daylight and going to market, she was so mad that she declared she wouldn't go to sleep again as long as she lived.

"Those people," said the pastor, solemnly after giving out his text, "who are either too poor or too stingy to afford fly-screens at home are perfectly welcome to sleep in this church every Sunday morning." And then he went on with his sermon, but he preached to the wide-awake congregation a good man ever looked down upon.

FESTIVE HOST (who has been told by his wife to make himself agreeable)—Uncommon slow, ain't it? Fact is, my wife thought it would be rather fun to ask all the bores who've asked us, and get 'em to meet each other, and pay them off in that way, you know. And she did, by Jove! And the best of it is, they've all come.

A NEAT DENIAL.—A facetious journalist wishing to "take a rise" out of Léon Gozlan, inserted the following paragraph among the odds and ends of his paper:—"M. Léon Gozlan was at one time a sailor, and while serving on board a brig not only caused the crew to mutiny, but also killed the captain." In the very next number of the journal appeared a letter, addressed to the editor by the author of the "Notaire de Chantilly." It ran thus:—"Monsieur: You say that I have been a sailor, which is quite true; that I caused the crew of a brig to mutiny, and then killed the captain, which is also perfectly correct. But you forgot to add a detail which may particularly interest your readers; after killing the captain I ate him!—Léon Gozlan."



## SOCIETY.

THE German Government, through Prince Bismarck, has, it is said, offered the Duke of Edinburgh double the amount formerly proposed for his revolutionary interest in the Grand Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

CALIFORNIAN belles have taken a hint from nigger recreations, and the Christmas social novelty in San Francisco is an aristocratic "Bones Club," these familiar negro musical instruments being said to show off pretty arms and hands.

The American papers have suggested that Mrs. Langtry should hold a levée in some great hall, as she cannot be made the recipient of a public dinner. Clearly the Langtry fascination has spread. It is needless to say that her name gives value to various articles of female adornment; even a new kind of housemaid's broom speaks renowned as "Mrs. Langtry's broom."

The Emperor and Empress of Russia are gradually appearing more and more in public. On Christmas Eve they dined in St. Petersburg with the Grand Duke Vladimir, and in the evening witnessed a performance of *Carmina* at the Marien Theatre, returning afterwards to the Anichkov Palace. The Czar has entertained the officers of the Finland Regiment to luncheon after a parade of the regiment, and their majesties have attended a public concert at the Club of Nobles.

The marriage of the Rev. H. Stewart Gladstone with Miss M. Cecil Gage took place on the 26th ult., at Fife church, near Lewes. The bride wore a dress of white corded silk, trimmed with duobess-satin, lace, and ostrich feathers; her jewels were of pearls, sapphires, and diamonds, and included a handsome gold bracelet, the gift of Lord Gage's tenants. The costumes of the six bridesmaids were of cream moiré, with white plush bonnets, ornamented with bright red pompons, and each wore a diamond and pearl arrow, the gift of the bridegroom.

OXFORD is looking forward to the arrival of Prince Albert Victor, who is to take up his abode there during the ensuing term. His royal highness will commence his university career by matriculating at Christ Church, as his uncle, the Duke of Albany, did some six or seven years ago. Prince Albert Victor will reside in the Bradham-road, near the Parks, where a house has already been taken suitable for the accommodation of himself and suite. It is said that the young prince is fond of cigarettes.

A MARRIAGE which attracted considerable interest was that of Major C. Louis de Robeck, youngest son of the late Baron de Robeck, and Miss Elinor Parry-Okenen, which was celebrated at Turnworth. The bride's dress was of broad white ottoman silk, trimmed with pearl embroidery and old Genoese point lace, a wreath of orange blossoms and shamrocks, over which a tall veil was fastened with pearl pins. The six bridesmaids' dresses were composed of cream nun's veiling, trimmed with lace, and red trimmings and stockings to match, red bonnets with chrysanthemums and shamrocks, and each carried a fan, the gift of the bridegroom.

THE Prince and Princess of Wales both attended the recent grand meet of the West Norfolk foxhounds, and the princess in particular, who looked in excellent health and spirits, showed a degree of energy which might have excited the envy of the Empress of Austria—that most devoted of royal Dianæ. The meet took place at Narborough, and two hours were spent before Reynard was found, no less than eight large plantations being drawn blank—all this in a continuous downpour of rain. Eventually, however, a fox was found, and her royal highness was in the van, throughout a ding-dong race of seven miles, which her royal husband and two sons led in the first flight.

## STATISTICS.

In the last two decades the exportation of meerschaum from Asia Minor has varied considerably; amounting to only 3,000 chests in 1855, and rising to 9,500 in 1870; in 1875 it fell to 8,300, and rose again to 11,100 in 1881.

WOLVES in France are still unpleasantly numerous, for no fewer than 1,225 were killed last year by persons who claimed the Government reward. Those slain by amateur hunters are not included in this return.

CATTLE.—The recent outbreaks of disease have caused, in the opinion of Mr. Mundella, undue alarm. "No greater mistake," he maintains, "could be made than to say that the Privy Council restrictions had been of no effect. In 1871, when they had no restrictions, there were 53,104 outbreaks, and 601,565 animals affected; in 1881 there were only 4,889 outbreaks, and 133,049 animals affected." A change for the better certainly, but if Mr. Mundella were a professional farmer instead of a professional politician, he would hardly speak so glibly of "only" nearly two hundred thousand cattle attacked.

## GENS.

It is the sunshine itself which makes every shadow.

HATE burns longest and fiercest whose fires are kindled by envy.

Good advice and timely assistance alleviate much human suffering.

I do not shrink from praise, but I refuse to make it the end and term of right.

JUSTICE is, in the mind, a condition analogous to good health and strength in body.

The character of a man is found by weighing his acts, not by listening to his speech.

RECOLLECTION is the only paradise from which we cannot be turned out.

PEOPLE who fish for compliments do not need long lines. They will get their best bites in shallow water.

ONE should be careful not to carry any of his follies of youth into old age; for old age has follies enough of its own.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PLAIN PASTE.—Beat the whites of one egg with one tablespoonful of lard; rub it into one quart of flour; wet with about one cup of ice-water, taking care again to use the hands in the paste as little as possible; roll out and spread one-half pound of butter on the paste; fold over the hedges and sides, pat and roll; repeat this, and put on ice until the time for using it arrives.

SPONGE CAKE.—The yolks of six eggs well beaten until light, one cup of fine granulated sugar beaten well with the egg, one saltspoonful of salt, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, the whites of six eggs well whipped, and one cup of flour. Mix in the order given, and bake in a moderate oven from forty-five to sixty minutes.

ROAST OYSTERS.—To roast oysters, wash and dry the shells; bake in a hot oven until the shells open; serve in the shells or on a hot dish with maître d'hôtel butter. This is very easily prepared, and is always suitable for anything that is broiled or fried. It is particularly nice with beefsteak. To make it mix together one-quarter of a cup of butter, half a teaspoonful of salt, half a saltspoonful of pepper, one tablespoonful of lemon juice, and one teaspoonful of chopped parsley; spread over the oysters, or whatever you are using it with, and serve at once.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

GOLD and silver coins have been made into buttons and otherwise brought into use as ornaments. The taste is for a quantity of them.

THE Regent's Canal Railway Company have made a purchase of a plot of land for £80,000 near the Metropolitan station in Bishopsgate-street. This ground is for a central station, but the line will run on to the Thames, near St. Katherine's Docks, and thus provide the Great Western Railway with a Thames goods terminus, as the Regent's Canal Company's line will run into the Great Western at Paddington. The Canal will be empty by May, if not earlier. It will be a very inexpensive line to construct.

A SON of General Selim Pasha has just become a pupil of the famous painter Gérôme. That the General's son should develop a taste for the fine arts is not extraordinary; but as the Koran forbids the followers of the Prophet from picturing living beings, the young Turk's step is in open violation of his faith, unless we are to suppose that he will confine himself to still life, landscapes and flowers. It is, however, very doubtful whether he would enter Gérôme's studio for that branch of art. Perhaps in this century the sun has taken to depicting living creatures, the Moslem youth will confine himself to studies from photographs and not from life.

THE Mont Blanc tunnel project seems likely to give way in favour of the Simplon scheme. The subject is shortly to be brought before the French Chamber, and Government will be strongly urged to promote a fresh railway route through the Alps, so as to check the predominance of German over French industry in Italy threatened by the new St. Gothard line. Most authorities support the Simplon tunnel, and the Government is suspected to be of similar mind, as it is officially announced that the French railway along the south of the Lake of Geneva, which was to have been taken on to Chamouni in view of a Mont Blanc tunnel, will now not be carried so far.

THE HEADS OF GREAT MEN.—It is usually supposed that men of great intellectual powers have large and massive heads; but, according to a writer in the new number of the *Journal of Science*, the theory which Dr. Gilbert, physician to Queen Elizabeth, was the first to suggest is not borne out by facts. An examination of busts, pictures, medallions, intaglios, &c., of the world's famous celebrities almost tends the other way. In the earlier paintings, it is true, men are distinguished by their large heads, but this is attributable to the painters, who agreed with the general opinion and wished to flatter their sitters. A receding forehead is mostly condemned. Nevertheless this feature is found in Alexander the Great, and, to a lesser degree, in Julius Cæsar. The head of Frederick the Great, as will be seen from one of the portraits in Carlyle's work, receded dreadfully. Other great men have had positively small heads. Lord Byron's was "remarkably small," as were those of Lord Bacon and Cosmo di Medici. Men of genius of ancient times have only what may be called an ordinary or everyday forehead, and Herodotus, Alcibiades, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus, among many others, are mentioned as instances. Some are even low-browed, as Burton, the author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy;" Sir Thomas Browne and Albert Dürer. The average forehead of the Greek sculptures in the frieze from the Parthenon is, we are told, "lower, if anything, than what is seen in modern foreheads." The gods themselves are represented with "ordinary, if not low brows." Thus it appears that the popular notion on the matter is erroneous, and that there may be great men without big heads—in other words, a Geneva watch is capable of keeping as good time as an eight-day clock.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**DORINE.**—A good mudilage for household purposes may be made by mixing three ounces of gum arabic and three ounces of distilled vinegar, with one ounce of white sugar.

**O. M.**—Sedlitz powders are composed of 120 grains of artrate of soda and potash, and 40 grains of bicarbonate of soda reduced to powder, mixed and enclosed in a blue paper, and 35 grains of powdered tartaric acid in a white paper. The reason for the use of these two kinds of paper is to distinguish between them when being mixed by the pharmacist.

**FRANK.**—The word *rappee* is of French derivation, and arose from this species of snuff being manufactured from dried tobacco by means of the *rape*, or *raspe*, an instrument by which the thin parts of the leaf were cut from the veins and fibres, the latter part alone being used in the manufacture of the above-named brand of snuff.

**MAURA.**—Any person bearing the proud title of man who stoops to insult a woman, no matter how low or degraded she may be, loses all claim to the name. The lady who writes, accompanied by her legal protector, went to the place of amusement alluded to, and the mere fact of her visiting such a place would not warrant any one in insulting her in such a base manner as you describe.

**GORDON F.**—When writing by common ink has become faded by age so as to be nearly or quite illegible, it may be restored to its original hue by moistening it with a camel-hair pencil or feather dipped in tincture of galls, or a solution of ferrocyanide of potassium, slightly acidulated with hydrochloric acid. Either of these washes should be very carefully applied, so that the ink may not spread.

**A. M.**—Bunions result from the gradual displacement of bones in the joints of the feet, owing to the vicious practice of wearing tight shoes; and that bad practice may produce suppurative, or painful ulceration. Rest and poulticing, with the use of a shoe so constructed as to save the bunion from pressure, will subside or moderate inflammation; but as amputation, or excision of the ends of the bones, is sometimes necessary, it may be well to seek medical advice.

**M. D. J.**—It is a difficult matter to fathom the hidden springs which influence a woman's actions; therefore, do not think that because the lady whom you asked to dance made an excuse, and was seen afterwards dancing with another, alighted you intentionally. It may be that she does not dislike you, but really preferred the other gentleman. It is a very hard case that women should be compelled to dance with every one who offers, with the alternative of not being able to enjoy themselves at all.

**FRED. L.**—The common feverfew is a perennial plant, found in waste places and near edges. It is botanically allied to chamomile, and still more nearly to wild chamomile, and much resembles these plants in its properties. Its habit of growth is erect, its stem much branched, and segments of its leaves being flat and comparatively broad, and its flowers smaller; it is from one to two feet high. It has a strong, somewhat aromatic smell. It was once a very popular remedy in ague. It is employed in infusion, and is stimulating and tonic.

**DAISY.**—We can scarcely advise you understandingly as we have no knowledge as to what has nearly blasted your prospects. Still, even if the miscarriage of your plans in business or social life be owing to your own fault, we would advise you to face the consequences manfully, instead of running off to a district where you are entirely unknown. You can begin a new career just as well in your present neighbourhood, and show by an upright, industrious life that you are determined to win reputation and a fair measure of success.

**LOUIS.**—As you state the circumstances, you are completely absolved from your engagement, and cannot in honour do anything to advance your claims as a suitor. Your lady friend appears to have decided to make sure of one lover, and so to have led you both on till she could make her final choice at leisure. Her acceptance of an engagement ring from both, and her promise of marriage to you, followed by a refusal to answer any of your recent letters, is a plain notification that she has chosen to throw you overboard.

**L. F.**—The special composition of the crown glass used for the lighting apparatus for lighthouses was for many years kept secret. A civil engineer of note, however, has discovered the component parts of both the French and English articles. The former is composed of silicic acid, 72 1/2 parts; soda, 12 1/2 parts, and lime, 15 1/2 parts, including some traces of alumina and oxide of iron. The latter is made from 560 pounds of French sand, 208 pounds of carbonate of soda, 83 pounds of lime, 28 pounds of nitrate of soda, and 3 pounds of arsenious acid. A patented furnace is used in making the best qualities of this glass.

**A. N.**—1. Dip the flowers in melted paraffin, withdrawing them quickly. The liquid should be only just hot enough to maintain its fluidity, and the flowers should be dipped one at a time, held by the stalks and moved about for an instant to free them from air-bubbles. Fresh-cut flowers, free from moisture, make excellent specimens in this way. 2. In drying leaves, the papers between which they are placed should be changed every second day, which papers ought to be dried well before the fire. With regard to the maintenance of their natural shape, the utmost care and attention is necessary when arranging them on the papers; and be sure to put a heavy weight upon the pile. When perfectly dry, they may be removed, and arranged in any manner your taste may suggest.

**GENIE.**—The onyx, the agate, the carnelian, the sard and sardonyx are only differently marked and coloured varieties of one stone, known as chalcedony. In its pure state this stone is colourless, or only tinted bluish-grey; but other matters are frequently present in it, which cause the variation in colour. The sard is a deep red brown; sardonyx, layers of brown and white chalcedony; carnelian, usually either red or white, always clear; agate, of various colours and diversified markings, such as ribbon-agate, moss-agate, fortification-agate, &c.; the onyx has layers of different colours.

**M. S.**—In your party on your twenty-first birthday you will naturally have to act as the host, receive the congratulations of your friends, and do all that lies in your power to promote the sociability of the company and heighten their enjoyment. As dancing will be a main feature you can easily relieve yourself of much of this responsibility by appointing several jolly good fellows to act as floor-managers and assistants, who will find partners and make introductions, and whose names should be printed on the programmes. On such an occasion it is usual to make the company a full-dress *sotée*.

**LINO.**—Birdlime is a glutinous and tenacious substance, which is daubed upon sticks for the purpose of entrapping any birds that may alight on them. It is greenish in colour, and has a bitterish taste. To prepare it, boil the middle bark of the holly, or the young shoots of elder and other plants, such as the mistletoe and other parasites, separating the gummy matter from the liquid, and leaving it for a fortnight in a moist, cool place, to become viscid. It is next pounded into a thick paste, well washed, and put aside for some days to ferment. Some oil or thin grease is incorporated with it, and then it is ready for use.

## THE BRIDE.

Ah! my pretty, bonny Mary,  
Cheerful, little, household fairy,  
At your bidding I have come!  
If your sweet note had miscarried,  
Then, my dear, I should have tarried;  
Now, I've come to see you married  
In your happy maiden home.

Though no costly gifts await you,  
Though no rich robes may elate you,  
And no diamonds deck your hand,  
Yet I think the man who met you,  
(May he ever love and pet you),  
And in some way chanced to get you,  
Is the luckiest in the land.

Though no precious dowry brought you  
To the one in love who sought you,  
Houses, lands, or yellow gold;  
Yet he'll find out at his leisure  
That he has a wisely treasure;  
(May he measure give for measure),  
If your graces you unfold.

Skilled in every household duty,  
Much more potent than your beauty  
For his happiness and weal!  
Little bride so fair, yet clever,  
You by thrift and sweet endeavour  
Will make strong, while others sever  
The silken ties in love and leal.

Take, my pretty, bonny Mary,  
Now another household fairy,  
Take the kiss I give to thee,  
With my heart's most fervent feeling;  
While you, little one, are kneeling,  
And the wedding bells are pealing,  
Sweet and joyous, glad and free!

C. O.

**L. D.**—1. I fully appreciate your feelings after being so heartlessly jilted by the young man, and in reply to your questions will state that the best manner of procedure in your case would be to endeavour to forget him altogether. To be sure, if you love him so fervently, this may be a most difficult task to accomplish, but still, if you make up your mind to do it, it will not be so long before your feelings will be changed, and you will see his character in its true light. But if, as the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words," we are compelled to state candidly that the young man did not exhibit an overwhelming amount of love for you by treating you so cavalierly. 2. As you are not in possession of his address, it would be impossible to return the presents he gave you. Doubtless, he will again visit your vicinity, and in that event you may demand an explanation of the unseemly treatment, which, if he be the gentleman you say he is, he will be most happy to give.

**H. E. S.**—Litharge is an oxide of lead prepared by scraping off the dross that forms on the surface of melted lead exposed to a current of air, and heating it to a full red, to melt out any undecomposed metal. The fused oxide in cooling forms a yellow or reddish semi-crystalline mass, which readily separates into scales; these, when ground, form the powdered litharge of commerce. Litharge is also prepared by exposing red lead to a heat sufficiently high to fuse it, and the English article is obtained as a secondary product by liquefaction from argentiferous lead ore. The litharge of commerce is distinguished by its colour into "litharge of gold," which is dark coloured and impure, and "litharge of silver," which is purer and paler coloured. The dark colour of the former is chiefly owing to the presence of red lead. In grinding this commodity, about one pound of olive-oil is usually added to each hundredweight to prevent dust. It is employed principally to make plasters and several other preparations of lead; by painters as a dryer for oils, and for various other purposes in the arts.

**A. F.**—Do not become disheartened at what seems to you a hopeless task, but send your parrot, if possible, where there is another bird of the same kind which has already learned to speak. They should be placed near enough to hear, but not see, each other, and your bird will soon learn to imitate. A good way to teach him is to speak to him at night, just when the cage has been covered over (which must always be done in winter), repeating several times in the same tone the sentence you wish him to learn. He may not seem to notice it at first, but some day, quite unexpectedly, he will repeat the sentence exactly in the same tone that he heard it. Reward him at once with a bit of sugar or fruit, or any other little dainty that he may be fond of. They are very quick at understanding that rewards are given for obedience.

**CONA.**—A lady is not obliged, by either the dictates of etiquette or friendship, to receive the attentions of a gentleman which are somewhat marked and disagreeable to her. If she does not incline to encourage his suit she need not treat him rudely, but it is not well to let him linger awhile in suspense, and then bring him to the point only to be repulsed. It would be advisable to take an early opportunity to express your views on the subject in a way which will permit him to discover your sentiments. There are various ways of doing this, and a young lady of ingenuity can easily seize the chance for using the kindest and most humane of them. A refined chilliness of manner will soon satisfy him, if he possesses any delicacy of discernment, that his addresses are not acceptable.

**ALICIA.**—To make a very strong glue an ounce of the best isinglass may be dissolved by the application of moderate heat, in a pint of water. Take this solution and strain it through a piece of cloth, and add to it a proportionate quantity of the best glue, which has been previously soaked in water for about twenty-four hours. After the whole of the materials have been brought into solution, let it boil up once and strain off impurities. This glue is well adapted for any work which requires particular strength, and where the joints themselves do not contribute towards the combination of the work; or in small filllets and mouldings, or carved patterns that are to be held on the surface by the glue. The article you refer to is, we believe, a secret preparation, but the above is recommended as equal to it.

**TIM.**—1. Gypsum is a mineral consisting essentially of sulphate of lime and water. It is very widely diffused, and occurs in great abundance in many parts of the world, being found in rocks and strata geologically different. It sometimes occurs in beds many feet thick. It is transparent or opaque, white, yellowish-white and grey, or even yellow, red, brown, or black, according to its purity of chemical composition and the nature of impurities present. 2. The water which it contains is driven off at a heat of about 372 degrees Fahrenheit, and it is then easily reduced to powder. In that state it forms a paste which almost immediately sets, or becomes firm and solid when mixed with its own bulk of water. It is then known as plaster of Paris, and is highly useful for making casts and cornices.

**MELUSINE.**—Your condition is rather pitiable, and you are acting under such trying circumstances, with a degree of self-control that does you credit. The better course would be to make a direct and private appeal to your father, stating how your stepmother treats all your visitors, and so, by her rude affronts, shuts the door in the face of your gentlemen friends. If you can enlist his sympathies in your behalf, as you should have little trouble in doing as an elder daughter, then the master of the house will be likely to exercise his authority in a way that will practically advance your desires. But if you do not contrive to make your home an agreeable visiting place, then you may almost as well give up the expectation of furthering that acquaintance.

**TOM B.**—The negro slave trade from Congo and Angola was begun by the Portuguese in 1481. Captain Hawkins, afterwards Sir John Hawkins, was the first Englishman who sold slaves in America. His expedition to transport negroes from the coast of Africa to the West Indies took place in 1563. The first negro slaves in the English Colonies of North America were brought to Virginia, in a Dutch vessel-of-war, in 1639. Their number was only twenty, and they were landed at Jamestown, where they were quickly sold. That cargo, fraught with so many evils, arrived in August, four months before the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. It was also in the same year that, by the king's command, a hundred dissolute convicts, known to the colonists as "jail-birds," arrived, and were sold as bond-servants for a term of years.

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